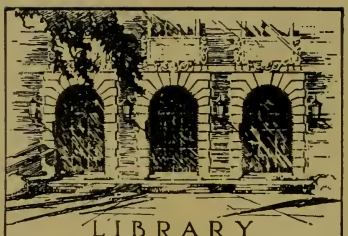
APERTO·VIVERE·VOTO
AVXILIVM·MEVM·IN·DOMINO
TOVT·JOVRS·PREST
18 78
CHARLES ARTHVR WYNNE FINCH

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/merchantsdaughte01pick



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
P585m
v.1

THE

MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE HEIRESS," "AGNES SERLE," &c.

Helen Pickering

Je n'ai pas de la prétension, vous le savez; je laisse errer ma plume.

PUCKLER MUSKAU.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1836.

823
P585m
v. 1

THE

MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

"How little things grow great through fear!
A cat's a horse, and a pin's a spear;
A stalking giant is a post;
A miller frock'd, a milk-white ghost."

"I FEAR it will not be in my power to make up a quadrille for you this evening," said Mrs. Elton, addressing some young ladies forming part and parcel of a circle of morning visitors assembled in the drawing-room of Mrs. Selwyn, a resident on the Royal Terrace, Weymouth. "A letter from my nephews, received this morning, announces the impossibility of their being with me for ten days to come. Owing to a change of military, and a little

common-place rioting in the West, not even a cornet can be procured, though I were to promise champagne and turtle; whilst I have received a friendly hint that our remaining standard beaux, (those worthy of regard being absent,) intend to take advantage of the scarcity, and to plead over-fatigue or ultra intellectuality as a reason for avoiding the intricacies of *chaine des dames.* What say you?—shall we abandon the attempt, rather than allow these presuming gentlemen the chance of triumphing in our defeat, and turn the intended dance into a converzasione? No prospect of a failure then, on our parts at least," glancing round with a good-natured smile, on the many talkers,

" Filling the chamber with their charmed tongues."

" Decidedly!"

" By all means!"

"An excellent plan!" responded the young ladies addressed, with ready acquiescence.

"Though fond of dancing, we can exist without it, whatever malice may assert."

"So shall it be then for the present," said Mrs. Elton; "but you shall not be entirely disappointed of your revel. A little time hence I hope to give you a healthful dance, to keep the blood in circulation these cold wintry days, —or, more correctly speaking, nights."

"I say, 'Not content,' cousin Elton," interposed Sir Charles Cleveland, glancing up from a chess-board, though on the point of checkmating his fair antagonist. "I have no genius for conversation. It requires an exceedingly clever person to talk well, and I am too volatile to be a good listener; but I pique myself on my dancing; so positively this evening shall be devoted to Terpsichore, or Taglioni."

"Fie upon you for a despiser of truth!" said Mrs. Elton, laughing at his sally. "No genius for conversation indeed! When were you ever awake and silent for ten minutes together?"

"Supposing this libel to be true,—and that truth is a libel, we have the judgment of judge and jury,—you have not proved me a despiser of truth. Talking and conversation are only considered synonymous by the ignorant, to which class, of course, my cousin Elton does not belong. Will you assert, not talking much, but talking well, is my forte?"

"I will assert nothing that can make you vainer, spoilt boy and man as you have ever been; but unless you intend to amuse my guests with a *pas seul*, or enact the cavalier to four ladies at once, you must be contented with conversation or talking, whichever it may be, provided we do not send you to Coventry for your presumption."

"No,—I shall dance, but adopt neither of the plans of which you speak," replied the young man with an assumed gravity of assertion that amused all his hearers.

"Does Sir Charles Cleveland dance so very well?" asked the exquisitely natural Miss

Brindley of her mamma, in an audible whisper, looking "through her ringlets so blonde."

"Doubt it not, Miss Brindley," replied the lively Cleveland, turning round upon her, to the further embarrassing of her already embarrassed manner."

"Witness your success at the Salisbury music-meeting! Your dancing was declared to be perfectly original," said his laughing cousin.

"Pshaw! that is the way great characters become defamed! The vulgar-minded cannot discern our springs of action. Had I danced *au naturel*, I should have had my dowdy partner's two sisters and three cousins inflicted on me; whereas, I had the credit of asking them, and the pleasure of not dancing with them. They did not know I was next heir to a baronetcy. 'Great minds cannot be judged by little ones.'"

"So you hope by this inappropriate quotation to resolve our doubts! But it will not

do; you offered proof, and proof we require. How will you enable me to sing

"My rooms they are furnish'd with beaux?"

"An inappropriate quotation indeed! Fie, Mrs. Elton! I never knew you rude before."

"Then I think I may expect pardon for a first offence at fifty-five. But take pity on my sex's curiosity. How are the beaux to be obtained? Are the stones on the Esplanade, or the bathing-machines before them, to be converted by a touch of your grandmother's wand into a band of gallant gentlemen?"

"The beaux shall be forthcoming!—seek to know no more—I have a scheme!" said Cleveland, assuming a magician's tone and attitude.

"With all due reverence for your magic powers, I must risk the pains and penalties of knowledge. Some old legend says, you created a peerage, and not a very creditable one as to birth at least, for the especial pleasure and advantage of Mrs. Higgins: now I have no taste for mushroom nobility."

"Do you believe all the 'lying legends' that meet your ear, my prudent cousin?"

"Does Sir Charles Cleveland avouch this to be a lying legend?"

"Not he, in truth," bursting into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. "But Mrs. Higgins is not Mrs. Elton, and *vice versâ*. The woman merited the ridicule by her mean fawning upon wealth and title. What if she did waste her smiles and flatteries on boors? they outshone in character many of her guests."

"And her daughter's elopement with one of the newly-created earls?"

"Why, there my penetration was at fault. I never counted on the calculating Ann committing the romance of love at first sight, and giving up the splendour of a regular wedding."

"I fear we have all follies wherewith to furnish merriment to others, but such jests are scarcely useful or warrantable, and almost always occasion equivocations, if not falsehoods,

whilst the ridicule sometimes falls on the innocent," said Mrs. Elton rather gravely.

"True," replied her cousin more soberly: "I never intend to play such a prank again; and, remember, I was but nineteen then, and in a youthful rage at her insolent treatment of my friend the curate. Moreover, I have not forgotten the punishment for my revenge. I had to post after the loving Ann, tear her from the arms of the Romeo of the neighbouring theatre, and submit to her tears, sighs, and reproaches; to say nothing of those of her mother and five sisters, and the expense of the four horses. As the widow of a respectable tallow-chandler, Mrs. Higgins would be respectable; as the meaner aper of, and fawner on, the high-born, she is despicable and ridiculous."

"Then your present scheme bears no affinity to your former one?" asked Mrs. Elton. "I know your schemes are generally original and extraordinary."

"And extraordinarily well executed too,

Mrs. Elton—you must admit that. Sufficient that my past and present plans exceed even the bounds of Highland cousinship. Are you contented with this assertion?"

"I would rather know what the plan is. I begin to suspect you have none at all, and that white satin shoes will be donned for nothing."

"O the incredulity of this civilised century!" exclaimed her cousin with a ludicrous expression of horror. "Commend me to the simple belief of the early ages. A wise man had some chance of being considered a wise man then; but, now-a-days, nothing is taken on assertion alone, expect a tale of scandal, or an utter impossibility, when such a thing can fortunately be found in these days of steam and science. There must be proof for everything beside. If you say black is black, which was considered in the good old times as an unquestionable axiom; some inquiring mind demands, 'And what is black?—how can you prove it to be

black?' I dare not fall in love, lest the chosen one should insist on my defining the sentiment. Even the sports of our childhood are invaded. The Elements, that quiet game so much patronized by sober aunts and uncles, and so eloquently recommended to the riotous, must be thrown aside as a thing of error, since Blair, Adam, or David, whichever it may be, informs us that instead of but four elements, there are thirty or forty. It is to be hoped he will class the birds, beasts, and fishes residing in each, that the decorous game may still be continued. Everything must be explained, or no one will believe. O for the good old times! All are sceptics and unbelievers now at the very moment when things once thought chimerical are downright common-place,—you amongst the number, Mrs. Elton; but, fortunately for you, I am the most accommodating and good-natured of creatures. Checkmate, Miss Selwyn! I could have given you the *coup de grace* ten minutes sooner; but I have some of the cat's

delight in playing with a plump, delicate mouse, when assured of my victim. As I said before, I certainly am the best-natured creature living," he continued, leaving the conquered fair one, and taking a seat by Mrs. Elton on the sofa. "I am going to let you into my scheme, though morally certain you will propose some petty amendments, and then claim the credit of the whole. Listen! The same post that told of the defection of your nephews, announced to me the intended arrival of two goodly dancing men; one coming for the purpose of buying a horse of me, the other following in his wake because it is less trouble to be led than to lead. They are not of that dangerous description of beings, men of genius, or of talent; even the tiny river Wey need be in no alarm at conflagration from the vividness of their ideas: but they dress fashionably, dance gentlemanly, and can converse with taste and sentiment upon the temperature of the apartment, the skill of the mu-

sicians, and the delights of a waltz ; nay, I really believe they know the name of some of Scott's novels, and will agree with any opinion of their merits boldly advanced : so I shall make it a *sine quâ non* to our bargain that they attend your party, calling on you to make up any deficiency in the price of the horse. Then as you declared the rarity of even the minimum of rank at Weymouth made one Baronet fully equal to two Misters, the only difficulty remains in deciding whether I shall enact my double part myself, permit one of the least fine of your fine gentlemen to luxuriate in the honour, or, assembling some of the gentlemanly-looking strangers running about, elevate the most presentable to the dignity of being proxy for my second self. How shall I decide?" concluded the light-hearted Cleveland, joining in the smiles of his hearers.

"Your plan is so profound, you shall have the whole credit of invention, decision, and

execution," replied his cousin: "for your own sake your proxy will have morals and manners."

"Of course, and I decide in favour of a stranger. I fancy the looks of one or two, and, with the assistance of the master of the ceremonies, will hunt them out on the instant. Should this scheme fail, we can then pursue either of the others. Aid me in my search, Phrenology and Physiognomy!"

"For goodness' sake, don't bring the burker!" said more than one.

"The burker! is there one here? I will have him to a certainty. A burker and a baronet! You see how modestly I yield precedence. Two such lions at the same party! Why, my dear Mrs. Elton, you will be the envy and glory of Weymouth for the next ten years. I am very disinterested thus to divide the lionship. What is his name, and where is he to be found? Do tell me all about him, Mrs. Hut-

chins. They say you know everything and everybody; that which is, and that which is not."

The lady addressed (the regular gossip of the place) showed no inclination to quarrel with the equivocal, or rather unequivocal compliment; and though others proffered information, the shrillness of her voice soon silenced all competitors.

"His name was not down in the arrival-book, for I looked over a friend's on purpose to see; and the postmaster could not tell it me, for he has never had a letter; and my servant did not know: so I went to his lodgings, for I always make out everything, and asked the woman if Mr. Jones lived there. His landlady, an ill-looking creature, said 'No;' and on my asking who did lodge there then, she grumbled out 'Gormals,' and closed the door in my face. He cannot have regular meals, for he is out at all times, and I have never seen him speaking to a creature."

"Weighty charges indeed," said the laughing Cleveland; "though I am afraid not quite sufficient to induce a jury to pronounce him guilty. But it is a mystery that must be examined; so I shall collect all the evidence and sift the matter to the bottom: it will be practice preparatory to my taking my seat upon the bench. He must be a real burker, or he will be nothing of a lion. Now, a man's name may be Gormals, and he may have irregular meals and receive no letters—(this last, I admit, looks like a determination to lessen the revenue, and produce a revolution, or an embarrassment of the Ministry at the least, and smells of treason), and yet he may be no burker. Have you further proof?"

"No burker!" cried Mrs. Hutchins indignantly. "Why, what can he be else? He lives in a poor gloomy lodging in St. Thomas' Street, close to the uninhabited house with the high wall round it, and just by the lane leading down to the churchyard."

"Perhaps he wishes for quiet, and would employ his thoughts upon the future rather than the present," remarked Cleveland with pretended gravity. — "But he has not subscribed at Thomas's," continued the lady pettishly.—"He may prefer writing books to reading them; which will only convict him of a deficiency in taste and wisdom."

"But sometimes he is up before the dawn, and sometimes out at midnight."

"Suspicious circumstances, I admit; but he may wish to behold Nature in all her varieties. How did he look when you met him at these times?"

"It is not likely I should have met him at such times," replied the lady sharply; "but my servant says she knows it for a fact."

"That is decisive—servants never repeat any things but facts," remarked the baronet drily. "Have you any other as well attested facts?"

"Many. A horse and cart are standing every night about twelve between his house and the burial-ground; yesterday a little boy was lost for some hours on his way to school, and this person was seen near him when he was found; and the butcher says that he eats scarcely any meat."

"Who can longer doubt?" exclaimed Cleveland, giving way to his mirth, to the evident wrath of the lady, and the embarrassment of some of the other visitors, who were not laughed out of their former terrors, though the laugher was a baronet, young, rich, and elegant.

"You may laugh as you please, Sir Charles Cleveland," remarked the affronted gossip; "but a burker or a resurrectionist he must be, and I cannot think why you are determined not to believe it after such proofs."

"Determined not to believe it, Mrs. Hutchins! Pray do not deem me so prejudiced; I

only wish to make assurance doubly sure, that the glory of my cousin's party may not hereafter be tarnished by the discovery that the burker was but a paltry copy, not a splendid original. The not eating meat is a most important fact; that being one of the peculiar and distinctive marks by which a genuine burker may be known: a little boy lingering on his road to school, while such a person is in the town, is almost as convincing a proof."

"You may laugh once too often, Sir Charles, for I see you are laughing, though pretending to be so grave; but how will you get over the cart standing every night near the churchyard?" demanded the lady between petulance and triumph.

"I shall not endeavour to get over the cart at all, but only take especial care not to get into it."

Here the laugh became so general, that even Mrs. Hutchins could not resist a smile; but almost instantly resumed the task of proving

the truth of her report, though absolutely shuddering at its belief.

"Others have seen the burker as well as me, Sir Charles, and have no doubt on the subject."

"Indeed! Now do tell me what he is like, for you have not described him yet."

"Why, he is one of the most ill-looking men I ever saw: with such dark fiery eyes: such a brow—and so tall and thin."

"Ay, I understand; looking like one of his own victims with difficulty restored to life, and still bearing marks of terror at his fate, and hatred of its executioner. This is retributive justice. I shall know him at a glance from your description."

"Others think him as ill-looking as I do. Ask your cousin, to whom I pointed him out only yesterday. She seemed quite frightened, and could not take her eyes off him."

"Heyday! a new witness," exclaimed the laughing Cleveland, who enjoyed the teasing

Mrs. Hutchins, aware of her gossiping propensities. "Come, cousin, give your evidence. What do you say of this fearfully mysterious person who was pointed out to you yesterday?"

"Whom do you mean, Mrs. Hutchins? Surely not the elegant young man we met in St. Mary's Street, who so politely stepped aside to make room for us? Nothing short of downright malice could transform him into a burker."

"Malice or not, Mrs. Elton," replied the affronted Mrs. Hutchins, "that certainly is the burker. The men get out of his way, looking after him when he has passed; and the women point him out to their children, warning them to hurry home from school lest he should put a pitch plaister on their mouths. Every one can see he is suffering from an evil conscience; and I am sure I thought you would never have done looking at him."

"Not every one, Mrs. Hutchins," said the

kind-hearted Mrs. Elton. "That he may have sorrows or errors to mourn for is the grief of humanity, but farther than that I could discern no trace of an evil conscience; and it was the interest excited by his appearance which induced me to regard him more intently than was polite, or would have been decorous in a younger woman. I could not dispel the fancy that he resembled some valued friend of my younger days. I have seen many handsomer, criticising only features: but rarely a countenance more indicative of intellect, or more capable of being lighted up with feeling or genius. If I read aright, that brow speaks of elevated thought; that short curved upper lip, of energy and firmness; and the dark eyes you call fiery, though I should dread their searching if anxious for concealment, seem also full of the rich beauty of the heart's best affections."

"What! my sober cousin Elton grown romantic and falling in love at first sight?" ex-

claimed the laughing Cleveland, highly diverted at the surprise, almost amounting to consternation, exhibited by the alarmists at this warm defence of the suspected burker.

"No fear of romance at my age, Charles; more danger of becoming a cold and calculating egotist: and you need not anticipate posting after me as after Miss Higgins."

"I am not so sure of that, cousin; the symptoms are alarming. You stand opposed to the whole company, who are lost in wonder at your blindness, and judge the burker to be also a magician. I must watch you both."

"By all means, Charles, if you like the trouble; but I think I can convince the company that this dreaded burker is no burker at all, but, on the contrary, a very proper youth. He sat in the same pew with me on Sunday; and I think a burker would scarcely go to church."

"Did he indeed?" interrupted some in alarm at the knowledge that the same four walls had

enclosed them; whilst Mrs. Hutchins exclaimed,

"Dear yes, I saw he did, and wondered how you could sit the service out: but you were always courageous. The pew-woman should have been ashamed of herself; but you may be sure he only went to church as a blind, and he did not look as if he knew what he was about."

"If you had said that he did not look to see what others were about, you would have been correct," replied Mrs. Elton. "I never saw any one more devout and attentive; and whilst that beautiful anthem was performing, it was evident his mind was stirred by higher feelings than mere admiration."

"Oh yes, I saw how wild he looked," said Mrs. Hutchins; "his eyes quite glared—one could not meet them. I am sure I wonder how you can admire him, for every one else thinks he has such a horrid frown;" looking round for acquiescence as she concluded.

"A very ill, down look," said one.

"A bold, fierce glare," cried another.

"A haggard, ruffianly appearance," added a third; and more than one, sensible and kind-hearted on ordinary occasions, prejudiced against this unfortunate stranger by the reports of his profession circulated for the last few days, fancied, believed, and asserted, that though not absolutely ill-moulded in form or feature, he had a terrific scowl, a horrid look, that made them shudder.

"Come, Mrs. Elton, you must succumb to numbers," cried her highly-diverted cousin. "Own handsomely he has a terrific scowl, and is a burker."

"No, Charles, that would spoil half your sport, and be a very unromantic proceeding. I have seen no scowl, though an occasional shadowing of sorrow I have remarked: indeed I should say, the general expression of the features is rather melancholy for one so young; giving the idea of suffering borne with

fortitude, feelings subdued and sublimed by mental energy—not rendered morbid by indolent indulgence."

"I know you to be a good reader of character from the veriest trifles, and begin to feel interested for this stranger," said her cousin, surprised at her earnestness.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Miss Brindley; "how can you feel interested for such a person? I am sure he is a real burker, for you can't think how he looked at me yesterday; and I dreamt of pitch-plaisters all the night."

"These proofs are conclusive," said the lively baronet with but ill-sustained gravity. "If he looked at you, he must be a burker."

"And such a name too,—Gormals! Oh, I am sure he is a burker," added the young lady, who, either by the accident of birth or the premeditation of art, was one of the most natural of the natural.

"Oh, certainly, Miss Brindley; as you so sagely observe, a man of the name of Gormals

must be a burker; your evidence is decisive, and positively I must give my verdict against you, Mrs. Elton. It is of no use to plead—the proofs on the other side are overwhelming. His being at church, as Mrs. Hutchins remarked, is nothing in your favour. Have we not proof positive, matter-of-fact proof, that the Evil One himself not only entered the churches at Lincoln and Christchurch, but absolutely took some part in their building arrangements. No, it is proved to the satisfaction of all that the man is a burker; so I shall start on the instant to secure his attendance at your party."

"Oh dear, Sir Charles, to be sure you will not really ask him?"

"Oh dear, Miss Brindley, but to be sure I shall; my cousin must not lose such a lion on any account. A young, presentable burker is not to be procured every day, and I shall engage him for you for the first dance."

"Good gracious, Sir Charles! I would not be in the same room with him, much less dance

with him, for the whole world !" exclaimed Miss Brindley in exaggerated terror.

"Take care how you affront him, Miss Brindley; your only chance of escaping burking is to play him civil: if not, the art is carried to such perfection, that a crowded room will prove no protection."

"Oh dear! what shall I do? I am sure I shall die if I try to dance with him !"

The young baronet's gravity, hitherto sustained with difficulty, gave way before the natural Miss Brindley's simple terror; whilst an elderly gentleman, who had been professedly reading a paper, but in reality enjoying the scene, addressed her in a reproving tone.

"How can you be such an idiot, Maria? Do you not see Sir Charles Cleveland is laughing at your folly? as well he may. I dare say the young man is no more a burker than you are. It is marvellous how people—ay, and sensible ones too, make bugbears, and then shudder at their own creations. If Franken-

stein was intended to fable that truth, it is a wiser production than many of its readers think it. No wonder the young man walks at dawn and midnight, when half the population look sideways at him, and draw their cloaks and their gowns closely round them, even with the road, the pavement, and the esplanade lying between them."

"Very true, sir," said the still laughing baronet. "All except the hinting at his not being a burker; that must be believed. I cannot have the splendour of my cousin's party dimmed by a doubt of his being a real lion, and go to chain the kingly animal," taking up his hat as he spoke. "Admire my generosity, since, if I secure him, I shall be but a secondary object of attraction."

"Go," said Mrs. Elton; "I believe I may trust you, and will stake my penetration on the stranger's being presentable anywhere."

"There he is!" exclaimed Miss Selwyn.

"Where? where?" demanded Sir Charles, springing in such haste to the window as to

upset a footstool and nearly overthrow the trembling Miss Brindley. "Do you mean that short thick man? or the spare one, his companion?"

"Neither: I mean that person on the esplanade, walking fast, and now nearly out of sight."

"What! that graceful figure, whose light yet firm step seems to speak of mastery over earth, and thoughts above it?"

"I have not such a quick penetration," replied Miss Selwyn.

"Walter Gordon, as I live!" exclaimed the baronet, after looking at the stranger for a few moments. "The very person I most wished to see!"

Stepping back from the window as hastily as he had stepped towards it, to the imminent peril of more than one delicately-shoed foot, and the discomposing of well-set sleeves, he opened the door, sprang down stairs, crossed the road, leapt the chains, and stood on the esplanade before the startled party he had left felt quite assured of his departure.

CHAPTER II.

"Thou art but a moonish youth after all."—*De Vere.*

Sir Charles's purpose of immediately following the stranger was foiled by the pertinacious politeness of a most civil bore, who detained him by sundry questions as to his health, and opinion of Weymouth; so that when he did succeed in reaching the object of his pursuit, Mr. Gormals the burker, or Walter Gordon, whichever he might be, was standing on the shore beyond the esplanade, and so deeply absorbed in observation of the scene before him, or lost in the intricacies of thought, that the baronet stood some moments by his side unheeded.

"Have you solved the important question whether the third, fifth, seventh, or ninth wave is uniformly the one of greatest magnitude? or have you decided the whole to be matter of fable?" said the baronet, at length getting impatient. "No discovery less momentous could have prevented Walter Gordon from knowing that Charles Cleveland stood beside him."

"Cleveland!" repeated the stranger joyfully, starting from his reverie and turning round on his companion.

"Ay, Cleveland," repeated the baronet, whilst the hands of the young men met with the firm, long grasp, that makes a mock of the mere polite touching of the fingers; "and lucky for you that Cleveland is here, and not inclined to cut a friend for being evil-spoken of, or you might sleep in Dorchester gaol to-night."

"Of what heinous offence have I been guilty?"

"Nay, never pretend to look so surprised

and innocent, Walter Gordon. It has been decided by a fair jury—proved before a second Daniel (meaning myself) that you are neither more nor less than a burker; and admired and popular as I deservedly am, I ran a risk of being excluded by the exclusives for owning you as an acquaintance: I am not sure they did not even consider me an accomplice. I am not in jest, whatever you may think. It has been proved against you that your name is Gormals (none but a burker could have such a name); that you lodge in a back street; receive no letters; eat little meat; do not subscribe to Thomas's; walk at dawn and midnight; keep a cart between your abode and the church-yard; horrify the whole town with fearful scowls; and, above all, nearly transformed poor simple Miss Brindley into an aspen for life, by fixing on her your doom-denouncing look. Guilty, or not guilty? Come, make a clean breast of it, man, and confess."

"Guilty to half the counts, not guilty to the others; so I throw myself on the mercy of my judge," replied the stranger, catching for the time his friend's gay spirit.

"Fortunately for you, Charles Cleveland is merciful; so let me hear what you can plead in mitigation of punishment, or in excuse for having made yourself the bugaboo of all the children of larger and of lesser growth for the last ten days. First let us hear of which of these awful crimes you have been guilty, and what temptations led you into error."

"First then, I do lodge in a back street, in performance of an old promise to a widow, formerly a servant of my mother's. I have received no letters, having few correspondents; the small quantity of meat I consider a mean accusation of the butcher: the beauties of the dawn, imaging the glories of awakening thought; the gentle gloom, or the stern grandeur of night, its myriads of bright stars, each one a world, or its silver moon struggling

with murky clouds, suit well with my present mood. Of the cart and the scowling I plead perfect ignorance; and as to looking with any burking intent on Miss Brindley, if you mean a pale sickly-looking girl with flaxen hair and unspeaking eyes, I can only say I am as free from the guilt as yourself. The young lady drew my attention by exclaiming, 'Oh, mamma, there he is! I hope he will not look at me.' Of course, I looked immediately, and then overheard, 'What a horrid frown!' an expression which vanity forbade my applying to myself. Paying little heed to those I met, I had no idea I had created such a panic."

"A tolerably clear explanation: but why change your name, and for one so uneuphonious?"

"The change must be traced to the imagination of your informer, or the indistinctness of my landlady's enunciation."

"And you really have not turned burker then? Now this is rather provoking, for I

promised to take you in that character as a lion to my cousin's party. Suppose you enact the part for this one night only, as the play-bills say?"

"Excuse me," said Gordon, smiling; "I have not your pranksome humour, and appear to have already caused more than sufficient dread."

"That have you, as much as 'the horned fiend,' hired by the king for the very purpose, 'for sixteen maravedis,' at the Campeador's wedding, as the Spanish legends tell. I wonder none remarked,

"'And there he goes, with hoofs for toes.'

I know you prefer the sublime to the ridiculous, so it would be only lost time to urge you to the task; but you must go with me to-night in your own proper character. Mrs. Elton knew and esteemed your father, has long been acquainted with you through my reports, and requires you to make up a quadrille: besides,

I do not let you out of my sight for some hours to come."

"I have lost my taste for solitude within the last five minutes, and place myself at your disposal. But tell me when you arrived. It is strange we should not have met before!"

"Not at all strange! Honest men walk in open places at mid-day; only burkers skulk in dark and lonely spots. I shall not soon forget the joke of your being taken for a burker, or, at best, a resurrectionist. This comes of being sober and sedate, with a touch of the lofty! No one ever suspected me of such a thing. That you could but have heard all the evil things the ladies said of you! But I will give you the whole scene." And he did give the whole scene, natural Miss Brindley and all, with such exquisite mimicry, that it would have been difficult to tell before its conclusion which laughed the most lightly, Walter Gordon or Charles Cleveland.

"I knew you would be amused and not annoyed," said Cleveland: "your cold temperament spares you many vexations which would infuriate me and others."

"Cold temperament!" repeated Gordon in bitter scorn; but scorn of himself, not of another.

"Nay, Walter, I did not mean the word as you take it," said Cleveland, seeing that the remark had pained, though why he could scarcely guess. Never cold to your friends: I only meant, above the petty vexations that worry meaner men. I have seen you brand folly and rudeness with their deserved contempt merely by your indifference to their impertinences. I never saw you really roused but once, and then it was my doing, purposely, I am ashamed to say, to see if you could be in a rage. I never attempted the thing again, and never shall. I would not meet such a look from you a second time for the sovereignty of the world, rather a peril-

ous endowment, I guess, in these times of movement. But what touched me even more than your look of indignant reproach, was the pain you suffered from the strength of your own passions, and the violent struggle to restrain them. I wonder you ever forgave me."

"A thousand delicate acts of friendship have long since effaced the remembrance of that one unkindness," replied Gordon warmly. "You judge correctly in thinking that the violence of my passions bring their own punishment; so that it is possible the worth of my usual calmness may be alloyed by cowardice. To the watchful care and holy guiding of my parents, I owe the partial subduing of a temper by no means as cold as many imagine. If trifles do not annoy me as they do some, I pay the penalty of the exemption by fiercer suffering in the sterner trials of this life. Our natural tempers and qualities I suspect are, in their varieties, more nearly balanced for good and evil to their possessors than is generally supposed.

The oak towers in its strength above the bending flower; but the storm passes harmlessly over the one, whilst it uproots the other. The feeble mind bows to sorrow, and weeps away its grief; the strong soul struggles and rebels, and it may be that the spring of life is broken in the warfare. It is our duty, as it makes our happiness, to seek to subdue or strengthen where the wisdom of self-knowledge shall direct; to subdue and strengthen, not in pride, but in humility. Moreover, I may not be always as calm as you may deem me: there are strong under-currents and unfathomable depths beneath smoothly gliding water."

"Do you intend to warn me of dangers lurking beneath this liquid plain?" asked Cleveland, pointing to the quiet sea before them, inclined, from the emotion of the moment which his friend's earnest manner had awakened, to turn the conversation from thoughts to things.

"My warning might not be without a cause

if I had so intended," replied Gordon more indifferently, following up his friend's desire to converse on less stirring themes than human passions, though almost instantly recurring to the former subject. "You may well call it a liquid plain; there is scarcely a ripple on the glass-like sea as far as the eye can reach, and the world of waters is withdrawing its sluggish tide from the shore with a groan rather than a murmur;—not departing with the gentle sigh of sorrowing affection, nor with the more noisy and frank farewell of livelier friends likely to meet again in amity; but with the hoarse muttering of wrath, threatening to return in desolating rage. I am not skilled in these matters, but to me there is a something oppressive and ominous in this unnatural stillness. I should say it foreboded a tempest of no pigmy force; and if I believed that some minds were so constituted as to catch the shadow that coming events throw far before them, I should think the advancing storm was to give a colour to

my fate, and that through, or amid its rage I should win good or evil. There is a wild stirring in my mind—an anticipation of some coming horror, some fearful struggle; but whether for life or some lesser boon, to myself or to others, I cannot tell."

"As imaginative as ever," said Cleveland with a smile, but a more subdued tone than usual; for, moved by his friend's earnestness, he too began to quarrel with the stillness. "Of course you do not believe in this shadowing of events before they have a substance?" he added archly, after a moment's pause.

"And why not, Charles? Animals are restless before coming storms, appearing to have a prescience of threatening dangers."

"So I have heard. Pigs, for instance, will grunt, snuff the wind, and run wildly through the woods. Allow me to congratulate you on an equality of prescience with a hog," said the baronet.

"Laugh as you will—'there are more things

in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio!'" replied his smiling friend in a gayer tone. "The wise may sometimes learn wisdom from the foolish—men from brutes."

"So Walter Gordon takes a hog for a tutor! I would wager my best hunter that your fancies remain aërial, without truth or substance, only that, if a storm should come, you will be sure to put yourself in the way of fulfilling them. A tempest, and Walter Gordon not out to succour the distressed, or admire its terrors, would be far more uncommon than these very fancies. But I see no chance of a storm: the sea looks as though it could never rage, resting in the bay like a babe asleep on its mother's bosom — a virgin chart without rock or shoal. There! who says Charles Cleveland cannot be poetical? For the sense of his similes he does not vouch."

"Yes," replied Gordon, with some of his

former earnestness, and without noticing his friend's claim to be poetical, "Yes — like a babe asleep on its mother's breast; but the babe will wake to strife:—like a virgin chart whereon are to be written this same babe's deeds and agonies. Think you it will long remained untraced? The storm will sweep across it, and not one glassy spot remain to mirror earth or heaven. The rock will spring up from its depths; and where is the skilful mariner shall avoid the shock?"

Gordon paused: his eye was intently fixed on the waveless sea, as if seeking to trace what should be written thereon.

"Depths!" repeated Cleveland. "Did you never desire to explore them, Walter? to read the secrets of the unfathomed deep?"

"Ay, with a wild and passionate longing!" replied Gordon in the same deep tone. "And I have sometimes gazed till I almost fancied I could pierce through the waters veiling the

wonders of its paths, and that its beauties were laid bare before me. At other times, I have imagined friendly arms held out to receive and to uphold me, till I could scarcely resist the springing into the waves to meet them. — But those are strange wild thoughts and idle longings," he added after a moment's pause. " Earth has more beauties than we can comprehend or are thankful for; and there are bounds to our desires for knowledge:— beyond those limits are the fields of error. Divine wisdom has drawn a veil before some of its wonders, for our debased and finite minds could not endure their glory. Does not the fable of Semele exhibit this moral to the over-daring inquirer? Were our passionate longings gratified, should we not perish in the blaze of splendour we had so unwisely and pertinaciously pleaded to behold?—or were it possible for the bounded and mortal fully to comprehend the unbounded and eternal, (which it cannot be,) what should save us from satiety,

the moral stagnation of the mind? Hereafter we may have the fulness of knowledge—now we must admit our blindness and adore."

By an involuntary movement the hat was slightly raised as though in reverence, and his eyes sought to take in the whole expanse before him.

"Then you forbid my paying Neptune a visit in a diving-bell?" said Cleveland after some moments' silence, relapsing into his former gaiety.

"No. What the power of man thankfully employed can accomplish, that let him profit by: but I doubt if Neptune need dread encountering your raillery if you find no other means of descent."

"I doubt it too; so, instead of fathoming seas, I shall content myself with fathoming hearts."

"No, no," replied Gordon quickly, and, as it seemed, with some slight shade of consciousness; "that would be a more dangerous

experiment than the other. Fathom seas, rather than hearts! The one may give beauties to your view; the other, but deformities. Content yourself with the smile on the lip; leave the depths of the human heart unexplored."

"Is your heart so full of deformities that you dread an exposure?—But I am no longer an inconstant, wavering boy, Walter, to be turned lightly from my purpose, as you turned me in former days,—for my good, I acknowledge," said Cleveland, half in jest, half in earnest. "Why have I not heard from you for many a long month?"

Gordon avoided meeting his friend's eye by looking over the sea; whilst his answer was in that measured tone employed when, convinced of the necessity of replying to embarrassing questions, the heart nerves itself to the task. Its very calmness spoke it artificial.

"I might ask the same question of you, Charles: my last letter has been long unanswered."

"Then you did write? I thought as much from my inquiries. Unlucky that the very bag containing your letter should be the one lost. I suppose your pride took miff at my silence, and whispered it was intentional."

"It did no such thing," replied Gordon, turning on his friend a frank and confiding look. "Though I have shared the common lot of humanity, and learned that men are not all we deem them in our dreaming days, the plague-spot of universal distrust is not yet upon me: I never doubted you."

"Thank you, Walter; you shall never have cause to do so. But why did you not write again?"

"You were abroad, and I knew not your direction: the papers proclaimed your return a few days since, and a letter is in my desk bearing your address."

"Freely and fully answered: you are fortunate in clearing yourself from charges to-day. A few more questions, and you shall be assoiled;

clear for the past, the present, and to come. How is it that I find you gazing on the open sea at Weymouth, instead of occupying a high stool in a confined counting-house at Fairport? I thought you a fixture there; likely to furnish the world with another common-place tale, by marrying the daughter, and entering into partnership with the father."

Gordon threw a flashing look on his companion, but, seeing nothing save curiosity and friendly interest, turned away abruptly, and answered in the same measured tone he had before employed.

"I have left Fairport for ever: I had no taste for business."

"Then you are no longer a merchant's clerk?" asked his friend in surprise.

"No," replied Gordon briefly and quickly.

"I am glad of it, Walter. I never liked such a situation for you: besides, I wanted you at liberty to roam the world with me. And yet, in my simplicity, I thought you planted,

as the sportsmen say. I heard the young lady had charms, so made up a romance at once. Was she a shrew, a fright, or an idiot, that my romance is without its usual *dénouement?*"

"The young lady was neither, and claims to be spoken of with respect and delicacy," replied Gordon, his face still averted.

"How came you to throw up the clerkship, then?" continued the lively Cleveland, too intent on questioning to heed the briefness of the answers. "When I saw you at your desk, not a hundred years since, you recanted all you had said, in your days of folly, as you called them, about the weariness, the unintellectuality, &c. &c. of a life spent in money-making, edifying me with a lengthy eulogium on the useful and honourable character of the British merchant—the delights and glory of extending civilization through commerce, and assisting the suffering and oppressed with gold, won by honest, liberal industry. So completely did you clothe business in the brilliant robes of romance, I

had nearly turned merchant myself. Nor was your zeal only in words. The grey-haired clerk, the Mentor of the troop of younglings, whilst he admitted, on my cross questioning, the occasionally finding a volume of rhymes or battles shuffled in with your books of accounts, spoke highly of your zeal and information, though for the first few weeks after your arrival he had looked upon you in despair, every duty having been performed in such a listless manner. What was the matter? Did you and the old merchant come to a quarrel? — or were you sent away in disgrace for writing heroics in the ledger, the cloven foot showing itself at last?"

"No," replied Gordon as briefly as before.

"No! No! No! three monosyllabic negatives! you are scanty in your information, Mr. Gordon. There is some mystery in this matter, and I suspect you will not come out as triumphantly from this questioning as from the

former; whilst, unluckily for you, as I said before, my mind is bent on fathoming the human heart. If you neither wrote epics in ledgers, quarrelled with the father, nor made love to the daughter, how came you to leave the shop of this Cosmo de Medici, as I used to call him and his abode, in my folly? I hope there was no question of forgery: I should not like to see you hanged."

"Thank you. I did none of these things. My taste for business passed away as suddenly as it had come on; and I took leave of the generous Cosmo, as you term him, much to his regret, and only to his displeasure from his wishing to retain my services."

"You are not wont to be changeable," remarked Cleveland thoughtfully, for the still more measured tone of the last reply had awakened suspicions that his friend was by no means unreserved in his communications.

"Many men are unsettled in their views of

life from twenty to the close of the next ten years," observed Gordon more freely, as if hoping the discussion was becoming general instead of personal; but such a change was not to his companion's taste.

"Do you mean me to understand that your taste for making money has entirely departed? Why, I remember, when I proposed a walk to see the town, you took me to a merchantman taking in her lading, as the object most worthy of attention; and whilst I was only careful to avoid falling over the bales and packages, descanted on the blessings of commerce. And yet this taste is gone?"

"Gone,—entirely gone," replied Gordon calmly.

"All your golden dreams departed never to return?"

"Never. I only desired riches as a means, and not an end."

"But the end must remain."

"Perhaps not," said Gordon, speaking more hurriedly than he had done before.

"Why, you sought riches to do good to others; and others suffer still!"

"I said so then, and I believed I said the truth; but the heart of man is deceitful, and I fear I had more selfish views," replied his friend, speaking with that regret with which the young admit the influence of less worthy motives than they had once avowed.

"You speak too harshly of yourself: that end could never have been base—it must have been powerful."

"It was; but it cannot be accomplished—must be abandoned," said Gordon with the sternness of a well-weighed and fixed resolve.

"Why so, Walter?—can friendship aid you?" asked Cleveland earnestly, placing his hand upon his arm.

"No, or I had claimed its aid," he answered

quickly; and Cleveland felt his arm tremble beneath his touch, though his still averted face was beyond his searching gaze.

His friend knew from his tendering no thanks, that Gordon dared not trust himself to speak.

"May I ask your future plans, Walter?" again questioned Cleveland.

"To live on my income, as other gentlemen do—or rather as other gentlemen do not," replied Gordon with an attempt at gaiety.

"Then am I to congratulate you on an accession of fortune?"

"No, but on more humble desires. The interest of the few thousands presented to me by my friend the merchant on my entering his house, as the increase of the money placed in his hands some years before by my father for my future benefit, will supply my wants."

"This is a change indeed. Where do you fix your residence? In 'some cavern wild, with tangled roots'?"

"No; I shall mix with my fellow-men."

"I doubt your finding your fellow," said Cleveland gaily. "Where is your money now?"

"Left in the merchant's hands; and the six per cent. he allows will suffice for my altered views."

"Pooh! The fellow will break! better let me have it. I can make more of it for you in my lead-mines."

"Thanks for your offer, Cleveland, but it must remain where it is."

"Into what profession do you intend to enter?"

"None."

"None! You who have so often inveighed against the perils of idleness and the blessing of having a pursuit—do you intend to become an idle man yourself?"

"The world will call me so, or something still less wise."

"And your calm tone seems to say you

intend to despise the judgment of the world. What may you call yourself?"

"I call myself nothing; but leave it to my friends or foes, if I have any, to give me a name."

"Modest. But what do you intend to do?"

"To improve any abilities with which I may be blessed, by study, thought, and observation; and then, perhaps, my experience may advantage some who have not had such time for either as myself."

"*Anglicè*, turn author. Pupil of fools one half your life,—tutor to fools the other. Of course you dedicate your first work to me?"

"Of course."

"Are you mad, Walter Gordon, to tell me this with that cool determined tone, and that quiet smile?"

"Owning my madness would but prove me a wise man, since self-knowledge is the height of wisdom."

"But you do not and will not own it," replied Cleveland between raillery and vexation: "have you counted all the costs of authorship?"

"I believe all."

"No such thing, I am sure. You have only nerved yourself against the strictness of reviewers opposed to your opinions: you have not thought of the line of separation between authors and not authors; the weariness of composition; the over-excitement of imagining; the disgust at finding the execution so painfully inferior to the conception; the disappointment of not being appreciated as you deserve; the petty jealousies, the vanity-inspired patronage, the ——"

"Stop, stop, Cleveland! I have thought of all these things, and a thousand more beside. No view can be more gloomy than that I have taken, and my resolve is but the firmer from the consideration. The weary drudgery of

tracing with a lagging pen the words that so ill convey the heart's strong feeling or the mind's deep thought, I do not propose enduring for some time to come. I must see and think, observe and learn, before I pretend to point out and teach; or I may devote myself to science. For the isolation of an author, should that time come, the tribe is now too numerous to admit of my feeling quite alone. Though the habits of authorship may, in some degree, unfit me for general society, I hope to hold communion with some of the lofty spirits who shed a lustre on their race; and if I may not hereafter serve my brethren, as I humbly hope, the glory of the delusion, if delusion it should prove, will have been of higher worth than the acquirement of meaner things. Neglect or contempt are not pleasant, but they may be borne; and I shall, at least, have sought to elevate to their highest possible perfection the powers bestowed upon me."

"And yet you mean to mix with your fellow-men, and to observe them? Will not their petty hopes and fears and strifes, their vices and their meanness, jar on your lofty thoughts—crush all your glorious hopes—bow down your noble spirit, till it break beneath the torture, or, to avoid the desolation of pre-eminence, sink to their lower standard? So I have heard you speak in other days. I have seen your cheek blanch at discovering the selfish hollowness of some mind's idol."

"You have, Charles, and so you may again; though such feelings are rather sobered. I am too apt to allow the splendour of some noble act to dazzle my judgment, and make me overlook more sterling worth; but time will amend this, and a greater knowledge of my own heart, man's best but sternest teacher, will enlighten more and more. That my feelings must experience many painful shocks, I know, and am prepared for the encounter. If I sought only to delight the imagination, those

shocks would be ruder still; but, though not undervaluing her glory, I rather seek to sublime and elevate the thought, ennoble the heart, clear and confirm the judgment; not to obtain the applause of man, though the sympathy of the noble is of high worth, but to do man service. I am no mighty genius to pine in mournful preeminence; (such solitariness proving the truth of my belief that mental powers, as far as earthly happiness is considered, are nearly balanced;) and though ridicule may be my only recompence for seeking to elevate the moral and intellectual character of myself and others, the attempt will bring its own reward. "Such man is, and such he will remain," say the indolent and selfish. All other things make advances towards perfection; why should not the mind of man? Has it not done so? Genius, observation, judgment, and right principles, have done much for other sciences; why not for morals and for manners? If I lead but one to

tread in that right path which will do honour to his Creator and good to his brother man, I have not toiled in vain."

Cleveland gazed for some moments in silence on the expressive face of his friend, now turned towards him, "bright with the glory of high thoughts."

"And suppose you fail, Walter?"

"I fail in a noble cause,—I have sought to fulfil the purpose of my being," replied Gordon firmly, though the fading of his former glow and the dulling of his bright eye showed he had counted on the possibility, and felt its anguish.

"You must choose some other plan in which I can assist you," said Cleveland warmly. "I could not bear to see your high spirit pining under disappointment — the jest of common minds. Make a fortune first, and then teach! A poor author turns out no scholars; his precepts are little prized, — he ranks but little higher than a burker," he added more gaily.

"I know it," said Gordon quietly.

"Why, you seem to know everything, Walter. What an invaluable partner you would be! Come and take shares with me in a new mine I am going to purchase. You shall have all the intellectual part of the concern your own way:—a suite of apartments at Cleveland Abbey, with plenty of books to study, and men to sublime, including myself and the miners."

"I do not think the higher of you for this, Charles, though I understand you: it was but what I expected," said Gordon in a voice that faltered slightly, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, and looking at him with eyes dimmed with 'the heart's dew.' "It cannot be, and it is not pride that makes me say so. Riches have not now the worth in my eyes they had a short time since, and the seeking them would not be to me a sufficiently absorbing pursuit; but in all my plans for the future I reckon on being your frequent guest and intermeddling in your concerns;—so look you to it."

"Psha! this all comes of reading poetry and romance! You may well turn aside in shame," said Cleveland, striving to laugh away his emotion. "If you scorn enlightening miners, why not enter into some profession? My relatives have interest, and you have worth and talent. You would thus have an honourable, and, in my opinion, a more advisable and profitable pursuit, with every chance of success. You would have every probability, —nay, speaking humanly, as the schoolmen say, you would be certain of acquiring wealth, fame, honour."

"And a peerage, might I win that!" demanded Gordon, in a deep, stirring tone, that spoke the intensity of his earnestness, gazing on his friend as if his reply should be the fiat of his fate, while a sudden fire came into his dark eager eye.

"Walter Gordon!" exclaimed Cleveland in a tone in which wonder at his sudden outbreak, contempt at the petty longing for a

title, and regret at the exposure of littleness in one so loved and honoured, were strongly mingled. "Are you the same who spoke so lately?"

The bright glow passed from Gordon's cheek, even the lips paled to a deadly white, and then cheek and brow flushed again to the crimson hue of shame, whilst his eyes sought the ground. "No, Charles, I am not the same. My lofty thoughts are gone,—I am bowed again to earth. The tempter came — had his power equalled his will, I had been his slave. And yet I would teach? Yes; but not now—not till I have learned to subdue myself," he added unconsciously, giving words to his own thoughts, rather than addressing another. "I thought that task accomplished—it is scarce begun. Yet I am not what you think me, Cleveland. The jewelled coronet—the gartered knee—the ermined robe, as such, are but as worthless toys,—they owed their momentary value only to the estimation of another. I hold rank as I held riches for-

merly—but as a means to gain an end; and even to attain that end I could not stoop to baseness, I could not cringe to pride; even in the moment of temptation I only thought of winning it by worth.—Worth!" he repeated scornfully. "Does worth look to titles for reward?—does it alone acquire them? Man may receive them in honour and humility; but if he toil to attain only them, there is a stain on his nobility. No! no! such things are not for me."

Cleveland looked at him earnestly, and Gordon felt that he was studying every feature, yet he did not turn away; but then neither did he meet his look.

"There is more in this than I understand, Walter: you have suffered much—very much, since we parted," remarked Cleveland with affectionate interest.

"I have;—the spirit's strife; the heart's stern struggle."

"And when you suffer, you do not suffer lightly, Walter. And I not near to share!"

"Better it should be so," replied his friend, grasping the hand extended towards him.

"That lost letter must have been written months after I saw you last — months after you left Fairport by the account of the clerk, who returned my letter addressed to you there a short time since with the information that you were travelling, and the promise to send your direction as soon as he possessed it," remarked Cleveland thoughtfully. "Did that letter, or does the one now in your desk contain the explanation I should naturally expect?"

"No; there was no matter of great interest in either."

"Was this kind, Walter?"

"It was prudent."

"Prudent? I would have been with you."

"I know you would, and it was better you should not. Your sympathy would have weakened — your presence would have unmanned me. As I must pass through life alone, better

to learn to bear its ills alone ;—its ill, I would say, for the great trial of my life is over,—the struggle has been, can be no more. I have questioned of the future—I have placed its pains before me, stripping its darkness of its gloom by daring to look upon it—I have lessened its power of infliction by curbing my own desires. One pang I must endure ;—that past, if my path lead not through smiling flowers and lovely vales, neither, as far as man can know, will it be devastated by the destroying storm : if the subdued mind breast not the giddy height, neither will it sink into the dark abyss. I knew our first meeting must be embarrassing, but I am more moved than I expected. Let us talk now of other things, and leave me to choose the time for confidence : it shall only be delayed till convinced I shall not make it an excuse for weakness."

" It shall be as you will," said Cleveland, touched, and rather incredulous as to the termination of the struggle, which had so plainly

left its traces on his features. "How my thoughtless gaiety and idle raillery must have jarred upon your feelings!"

"Do not reproach yourself for these; I preferred both to your after-questioning, though I knew it must come. Shall we return to the esplanade? Your pardon if I admit I should prefer a crowd just now to a *tête-à-tête* with you."

"For once I forgive the humiliating admission, and you shall admire my moral courage in parading the esplanade arm-in-arm with a celebrated burker. Shall I introduce you to your traducers?" he inquired, resuming his usual gaiety.

"I am at your disposal; only be reasonable in your mirth, and do not require from me any other character than my own."

"Agreed! only be your gayer self;" and arm-in-arm the friends deserted the green hill and returned to the esplanade.

Had they really required a crowd, in the

proper meaning of the word, they would have been disappointed; winter is not the crowding time. The temporary visitors had nearly all departed, leaving the town to the quiet possession of the usual residents, or those established there for the winter season. The summer guests, with their dress-dresses, and most fashionable, and frequently most uncomfortable bonnets—their wondering looks, and their unsocial numbers, no longer walked the esplanade 'from morn till dewy eve,' with the apparent determination of bearing away in sea-breezes the full worth of their disbursements; but were replaced by those who, if less gay in their attire, had certainly faces quite as fair and intelligent, and manners and appearance as lady-like. The summer has its grander gaieties, its regatta and its races; but the winter is the time for friendly society. The town being too small to admit of more than one circle, each knows each, and each is interested in the other. The proportion of worth, beau-

ty, and talent, must vary with every season; but the general style of society remains the same. As some will think every character a portrait, (each discovering that of a friend, never his own,) perhaps I may be permitted to say I draw from the mass, not from individuals. Public characters belong to history, and must submit to evil or good report;—this is one of the penalties of greatness;—but domestic life should ever be held sacred. The avidity of the herd of ungenteels for last dying speeches and confessions is not more vulgar and reprehensible than the avidity of many who would fain be considered among the *élite* for the trifling details and false or malicious scandals of what are termed the fashionable circles. I enter no family, I sit at no board to gather tattle which may suit the vitiated taste for individual detraction; but were I base enough to deal in personalities, turning a private defect into a public ridicule, the inhabitants of Weymouth are some of the last who would suffer from this

abuse of my pen. "That daughter of the sea" is linked in my memory with friends, with kindness, and with sympathy, that, let the future smile or frown as it may, can never be forgotten.

Cleveland found ample amusement in introducing his friend to all he met, more particularly to those who had displayed so much penetration in discovering his profession: nor did Gordon's manner, sometimes as lively as his own, balk his merriment. So pleasing was the stranger's address, that the tide turned strongly in his favour. Some tried to back out of former suspicions and assertions; others wondered they had ever fancied ill looks and scowling brow, attributing their fancy to his manner of wearing what they considered a peculiarly ugly hat. His height was no longer pronounced suspiciously superhuman, but the proper standard of elegance; and if he were a *leetle*—a very *leetle* too pale and thin, the romantic decided the defect, or rather distinction,

only made him the more interesting. Even the natural Miss Brindley forgot her terror, and, what was more extraordinary, her ultra simplicity, partly owing perhaps to a little awe of her sensible father, who was present, and answered the stranger's playful charge of defamation with less folly than was her wont.

Mr. Gordon the friend of Sir Charles Cleveland was a very different person from Mr. Gormals the suspected burker, unknown by any; and before they had traversed the esplanade he was decidedly as interesting, if not as popular, as the young baronet himself. The gentlemen who had hinted at playing fine, supposing from the accidental absence of the more estimable beaux, their services would be indispensable, prudently abandoned the design, and submitted with tolerable grace to refusals or coldly-accorded assents. In short, all things seemed to go as right now for Mrs. Elton's party as they had gone wrong before, and, as the nursery legend says, "the pig went

over the bridge, and the old woman got home just before 'twas dark."

Lest the legend quoted and its quoter should be blamed for a want of sublimity, be it known to all the critical that one very nearly resembling it finds a place in the Talmud.

Cleveland looked in surprise at his friend's gaiety, and Gordon answered the look from which he turned.

"I rated my strength too high; and when we seek to disguise or control, we are apt to exaggerate. A wise and a strong man only sees and maintains the mean; a fool or a pigmy cannot crush without an unnatural exertion of strength. I feel a relief that our first interview is over: I dreaded, as well as desired it."

CHAPTER III.

"Are there not sympathies,
'Twixt nature and man's spirit,
That the dull wot not of?"

"N'aimons jamais, ou n'aimons guères.
Il est dangereux d'aimer tant!"

Landsman as he was, Gordon had judged correctly of the ocean's signs; and he and his friend found some difficulty, the next morning, in retaining their station on the Nothe, whither they had gone at the desire of the former.

The Nothe is a high headland, running out into the sea from the old part of the town; bounding the harbour on one side, towards which it descends precipitously; sloping down

to a small bay on the other; and commanding an extensive view of the town itself, the burning cliff and the hills beyond, the Look-out, the Isle of Portland, and the Chesil Beach. At the extremity above stands the Preventive House, enclosed within paling, and forbidden to be approached; at its base, a low breakwater, or jetty. Its verdant summit, from the delicious freshness of the sea-breeze, is a favourite promenade of a summer's evening; but few frequent it in the winter.

"Out upon you, for your taste for storms!" said Cleveland, drawing his cloak closely round him with one hand, whilst the other more firmly secured his hat, just on the point of undertaking a voyage. "I could almost fancy you the genius of the tempest, glorying in the war of elements."

"Yes! my heart stirs within me at the tempest's shock; my spirit rises, as though to hold communion with higher powers—sympathy with things unearthly; and though I see

the hand of God in all—his power, his mercy, or his love,—I seem to feel his might more deeply in the storm, to be more assured of his protecting arm—prouder, greater in my humble trust, than in the knowledge of my own strength at a more tranquil moment."

Cleveland shook his head. His friend's look and attitude,—his remark, rather than reply, seemed to promise ill to some favourite scheme.

"Psha!" he replied almost pettishly, "I see nothing so sublime in a rude south-westerly wind and a deserted esplanade. The driving clouds are not in sufficient masses to be grand, and the fretting waves too petty to be awful."

"True," replied Gordon, taking no notice of his vexation; "they are as yet but the omens of the tempest — the driving passions and stirring thoughts in a young high heart: the fury of the storm will not be the less for its gradual approach."

"Never heed the storm, Walter! I have no taste for the awful in anticipation. Let us

return, or we shall be suspected of making signals to the smugglers; and, though outrageously loyal, I can spend my money more pleasantly than in enriching his majesty's exchequer. Make haste! my teeth are chattering, and here comes a hideous steamer, like a gas-house afloat. Every sublime idea, every exalted thought, must vanish at her presence; she is the very antipodes of romance, with her tall bare chimney, and gloomy wreath of smoke lingering behind her like the memory of evil deeds. She is business and money-making from bow to stern, and you have lost all taste for them, you say. You could only think her sublime by fancying her a demon or a plague-ship!"

"A steam-ship is a glorious sight to me," replied Gordon, bending over the edge of the cliff to catch a full view of the murky vessel as she dashed round the point of the jetty beneath them, flinging the white spray before her with a hoarse and rushing sound.

"A steam-vessel a glorious sight! Commend me to the imagination of a poetical youth of three-and-twenty!"

"Yes! a glorious sight, Cleveland, despite your mocking. The storm tells of the might of God—the steam-ship of the might of man; a lesser glory, reflected and subordinate, yet still a glory; and I should grow proud and presumptuous at the thought of what man's mind has done towards lessening human labour, only for the remembrance that, but for man's sin, he had not been condemned to win his bread by wear of mind or toil of limb. Look back on the history of centuries, see the advance of knowledge and of science—sometimes with a sudden rush, sometimes with a creeping step—mark its spring in the present day, and then say what shall bound the might of man? Nothing but his Creator's will, and man's own sin. Mind cannot be stationary; man is not what he was—who shall say what he may be? Perfect he cannot be on earth; but, short of

that, who shall bound his elevation even here? And time can place no limits to his advance to knowledge and to holiness hereafter, for time will be no more, and the love and the power of the Infinite are boundless. The steam-vessel is to me a type of the march of mind. A few years since, and the thought was laughed at—its advocates derided as visionaries;—a few years hence, and the perfection of its powers may make its present adaptation seem but as the toy of the boy to the grown man."

At another time Cleveland might have sympathised in some slight degree in his friend's enthusiastic hopes, but at the present moment this train of thought was annoying, seeing in it, as he did, a confirmation of Walter's determination to pursue the plan he had announced, and the consequent disappointment of his own desires. His vexation was sufficiently visible.

"Your words convict you of error, Walter. Were the world to last for ever, no eulogium on a black and shapeless hull—a vomiting

fount of defiling smoke—a thing of coals and sooty engineers, the black art of money-making—could exceed yours for fancy, we will not say for truth. No! not though the mind should advance with a thousand-horse power!"

"You are abusive, Charles; and that is an error in manners."

"To hear you extract sentiment from such a hideous piece of matter-of-fact is enough to make the most delicate fashionable use ugly words. I thought I had posed you—no one but you would have done it."

> "It is the heart that does magnify this life,
> Making a truth and beauty of its own:"

remarked Gordon with a placid smile.

"If you take to quoting poetry upon the Nothe on a blustering winter's day, I have no hope of you; whilst your doctrine of the advance of knowledge is enough to terrify all the stand-still greybeards into second childhood. Education is to them nearly as horrid a bugbear as reform."

"Do you mean to run a tilt with me on that score?" asked Gordon gaily.

"Not here. Come back to my fireside, and I will try to dismount you from your hobby."

"Let this be our arena."

"No! no! I am half an iceberg already; and coldness and eloquence are incompatible."

"Our moods are not in harmony this morning, Charles. I feel power and elevation; whilst you (pardon the ugly truth) seem little inclined to be pleased."

"Not inclined to be pleased with a blustering wind, certainly, nor your desire to watch the storm; but you can make me all pleasure. Give up your idea of touring, and go with me to Cleveland Abbey."

"Is it that has put you out of humour?"

"Is not that enough? We have not met for many months, yet you would part us immediately, for I must proceed to the Abbey."

"It must be so!" said Gordon gravely, but evidently with some regret.

"It shall not be so — go with me to the Abbey," pleaded Cleveland earnestly.

"I dare not! I am afraid," replied Gordon, so archly and significantly that Cleveland turned away to conceal his consciousness.

For a moment the characters of the friends seemed completely changed.

"Nonsense! What can you fear?"

"That, unlike Moore's hero, I may be tempted by woman or gold," replied Gordon pointedly.

"Is it possible you can?" began Cleveland abruptly, stopping as suddenly.

"I know all your kindness," said Gordon with the earnest tones of friendship. "I heard Mrs. Elton speak of her early feelings towards my father, checked by a parent's wishes; and her generous intentions towards myself, as well as your desire to bind me to you by what many would consider a closer tie than friend-

ship. I was so perfectly ignorant of being the subject of your discourse till its conclusion, that I was guilty of listening in the greatest innocence."

"And you reject my sister? — you refuse to become my brother?" demanded Cleveland impetuously.

"It is not for me to reject what on after consideration you would not offer," said Gordon much affected.

"Yes, Walter, I would offer it now and hereafter. You were my friend, my guide, in childhood, in trouble, or in danger: when others flattered, you advised; when others censured, you soothed; and when sickness came—infectious sickness, from which the dearest and the boldest might have shrunk—you watched by me with a mother's love. Will you reject my friendship now?"

"Neither now nor ever," replied Gordon warmly. "But this matter must be discussed more coolly. In your kindness, Mrs. Elton

and yourself have proposed a plan that cannot be accomplished."

"Why not?" asked Cleveland quickly. "You always quarrel with my plans."

"This is an old complaint of yours, Charles. Have your plans been always of the wisest?"

"Not always: some have been on a par with yours of yesterday."

"Fairly retorted, and it may be truly too; but your present scheme is impracticable. None but such warm hearts as yours and Mrs. Elton's could have formed it—and——"

"—And such hot heads, you would add," interrupted Cleveland.

"I would not be rude!" said his friend, faintly smiling. "Do but think yourself. The lady and I have never met."

"I intend to bring about the meeting as soon as possible."

"But the lady may detest me."

"That can she not. She is prepared from

my descriptions to think of you as I wish, and she is worthy even you."

"My dear Cleveland, do think of the ridicule of bringing two people together with the injunction to fall in love. Did inclination ever fail to rebel in such cases? Then there are other and stronger reasons."

"No reasons at all!" said the impetuous Cleveland, bent on accomplishing a wish so near his heart. "Louisa and myself are orphans, with no one to consult; and you are above the petty pride of regretting that your bride should be endowed with this world's riches. I do not covet for her a connexion with nobility, and you have birth, talent, worth: I would rather bestow my sister upon you than on any other in the land."

"Your friendship endows me with virtues I do not possess; and the world little heeds the long descent of the poor."

"Surely, Walter, you would not make a

few thousands a reason for rejecting my sister?"

"Not if convinced that in after times she would not think she had made a sacrifice."

"Well, then?"

"But this is not the point."

"You hold Louisa to be unworthy," said the brother, jealous for his sister.

"Not so, Charles; only too worthy not to have a heart wholly devoted to her, and that—"

"—You shall give her," interrupted Cleveland.

"That cannot be!" said Gordon firmly, though his cheek changed as he spoke.

"Yes, yes! it can be! it shall be!" replied Cleveland after looking at his friend for some moments in silence, "*A tendresse* past need be no hindrance:

'You have but tried your 'prentice hand.'"

"The feeling is neither a past nor a passing one—such is not my nature," said Gordon

with strong and but half-suppressed emotion. "Earth has but one star for me, in whose light I walk through life."

"I had thought from your words,"—said Cleveland, hesitating and in vexation.

"You thought correctly," replied Gordon, answering to his meaning. "The hope is hopeless."

"And yet you cherish it! Does this speak of your usual wisdom?"

"Wisdom, Charles! Do not mock me with the word! Does the head reason when the heart suffers? Months have been spent in striving for self-control. I prided myself on my acquired firmness; a word — a thought has overthrown it. The victory was but temporary—the combat must be daily."

"Not so, Walter. Let the past be as the past, and one impression efface another. Look on that sand! where are the traces left by the waves of yesterday?"

"I am no changeling, Cleveland," said

Gordon proudly. "Let common memories be effaced by the morrow's wave; but there are those, neither storm, nor time, nor the toil of man, can erase. They character the mind — they impress the heart — they pervade all thought, colouring the world around — they are more precious even that their abiding is a pang."

"Forgive me, dear Walter! I did not mean to pain you thus," said Cleveland warmly, rebuked by the speaker's strong emotion.

"I should rather ask your forgiveness. I was too hasty, too prompt — ever too prompt to read reproach where none was meant; or, alas! had it been meant, was well deserved. I would fain be thought, and think myself, the oak of which we spoke but yesterday, that bends not, though it breaks; whilst I am but the flower waved to and fro by every breath. I toil for firmness—I should seek humility."

"No, Walter,—the fault was mine. You are no changeling, and I spoke of change too sud-

denly; but some months hence—years even, if you will — when time shall have dulled memory and hope be no more, then perhaps?"—

"My hope is even now no more, as you read hope. I know some other must possess what I hold as earth's chief treasure — I would school myself to bear the thought: by my will we meet not again till, as you say, time shall have dulled memory, if that can be; but I will not resign the privilege of holding communion with her in the spirit's lofty aspirations—I will not vow to another that life which I once hoped to vow to her. She does not—she never will know, that the hope of being worthy her regard will urge me on to higher things than all the gauds and riches of the world can goad its votaries to seek. She is the pole-star shining on my path—only less worshipped than the Mighty One who placed it in the heavens for our guidance."

"You will not be the first who has made unto himself an idol too lofty for common use,

and then bowed before one of more earthly matter," remarked Cleveland after some moments of silent wonder.

"Yes! to their own shame and misery! But you have heard more than enough of my folly, if folly it is, as you plainly think," said Gordon, colouring at his own sudden burst, and vexed at having thus exposed his secret hopes to the mistrust, not to say ridicule, of even such a friend. "Supposing I could change, that change would be little to your sister's taste."

"How I hate mischievous looks and long memories!" said Cleveland, clearly annoyed. "What if I did tell you some nonsense of the girl's about first love and other follies? she is older and wiser now, or will become so. Not two in a thousand marry their first loves, as they call them; raw youths, or gawky schoolgirls. First attempts are generally of little worth."

"You shall have the hundredth impression

then,—I prefer the proof," replied Gordon with a smile.

"No, not the hundredth—only the second."

"Once admit of the possibility of change in some things, and stability is but a mock—constancy but a jest," remarked Gordon.

"It is wise in you to limit this consequence: had you made it universal, it would have overthrown your theory of man's advancement. I am in too ill a humour to trust myself to combat the point at present; but remember, Walter, I do not acknowledge you the victor."

"I will not consider myself such."

"Generous! But you still persist in your refusal to visit Cleveland Abbey?"

"Far from it: I intend to spend much time there. Only tell me, on your honour, you have abandoned this pet plan of yours, and I am at your command. I am not such a coxcomb as to suppose Miss Cleveland cannot resist my merits; and with no interference we shall meet as friends, and friends remain."

"Then you return with me," said Cleveland gladly.

"Can you give that pledge in honour?"

"Psha! I will see what I can do."

"I only wish you to do nothing."

"Well, well! so let it be! At any rate, Louisa will not command at the Abbey for a month; so you become my guest."

"Agreed! And now, Charles, let me try to thank you and Mrs. Elton as you deserve—as the heart would speak could it find words."

"Out upon you! You have talked nonsense enough already to justify a statute of lunacy; you cannot tell but what I had changed my mind about you, and Mrs. Elton might not be best pleased to think you knew she had not married her first love (some people are touchy in these matters), so do leave this Icelandish hill, and keep your handkerchief to your mouth, lest you breathe the cold air," said Cleveland gaily, proceeding towards the town with rapid strides as he spoke.

"Stay, Charles; you must hear!" and his friend placed himself before him.

"Walter Gordon, do you desire to be hanged for murder? Here have you detained me on this inclement spot till I feel deadly symptoms —excessive drowsiness, first and foremost. Catch me on a hill with you again on a stormy winter's day! You did not wish to stay five minutes forsooth—you only just wanted to look round. It is of no use attempting to speak, for I will not hear a word. I have imagined all you ought to say, supposing you much more eloquent than you really are; and if you bar my homeward path, I shall throw myself off the cliff in despair. Now do not make as great a child of me as of yourself: I do but as you would have done; and it is hard to be thanked and thwarted too," he added, turning away his glistening eye from his friend's speaking face.

"You know my heart, Charles. If my lips do not say much, it—"

"—Will be a most delightful thing for your

friends, and very different from their conduct for the last hour," said Cleveland, interrupting him. "I am weary of your long speeches; and as for knowing your heart, I boast no wisdom in deep matters, never pretending to comprehend the incomprehensible. Come along! Terry and Dobson are waiting for us to go to Dorchester."

"I am not going with you to Dorchester."

"Whither are you going then?"

"Thither!" pointing towards the West Bay.

"Thither! What! into the sea? or over the sea? Are you wild, man? Have not you had blustering enough for one day? No, I see your mind is set on the thing, and I might as soon hope to guide his majesty's chalken steed," pointing to the horse and his rider engraved on the opposite hill, "as hope to lead you. A strange equestrian taste, to ride the storm instead of a gallant hunter! I verily believe you are but a half-tamed merman."

"You have guessed my fearful secret," said

the laughing Gordon; "I have some thoughts of exhibiting myself."

"Delightful! I will be showman, Walter, and we will travel the country. I am loth to lose sight of you the day after our meeting, and Terry and Dobson are so stupid!"

"I suspect you dread my taking to the water again, and blighting your hopes of gain."

"No wonder if I did. What are you going to the Pebble Beach for?"

"What for, Cleveland? Look at the white horses, as the seamen's children call them, dashing gallantly on in the distance, there on the opening sea to the left of Portland; now turn to the right, and watch the spray coming over the Pebble Beach as drifting snow. Even here I feel it on my brow. The West Bay must be in its glory, and I would go and look upon it. It is the first tempest since my arrival, and the spirits of the storm seem like to do their bidding gallantly. Were I absolute

monarch of the elements and could ensure man from suffering, I should order tempests for court pageants."

"What a pity that so great a man should in this matter show madness! as Alfonso d'Este said of Tasso, or something very like it," replied Cleveland, shrugging his shoulders.

"Who are the sane men of this earth?" asked Gordon with a smile. "But for this horse-bargain, I should persuade you to join me."

"Not you indeed: I am too stupid to run mad. You dine with me?"

"Perhaps, should the storm sate me in time; but do not expect me till you see me. Your talented companions dine with you, or I should be more exact. Good-bye!"

"One word, Gordon," said his friend anxiously. "I have just thought of your yesterday's fancy that this storm would influence your fate: can it be any such feeling that leads you to the bay?"

"I have ever sought to behold storms in all their beautiful varieties," replied Gordon evasively.

"This is no answer, Walter. Tell me truly! You were not wont to be superstitious."

"All imaginative people are so more or less, though judgment may control its excess. I own, some vague yet powerful feeling bids me to the bay."

"Walter, you shall not go! or not alone. I will accompany you."

"I thank you; but putting off your ride to Dorchester would inconvenience yourself and others. Who is superstitious now? Our meeting and consequent recurrence to the past has disturbed my quiet: in such cases, the calm of nature rebukes,—excitement turns to stirring scenes. It is the sympathy between nature and the mind at the present moment that draws me to the bay."

"And you will seek no danger?"

"Certainly not for the sake of the danger: I never did so even as a reckless boy."

"You will not go on the water?"

"Truly, Charles, you have talked of my madness till you believe it. Who would embark for pleasure in the West Bay on such a day as this? You do not know the place. I expect to encounter no greater danger than a drenching from the spray."

"But the Portlanders are a strange uncouth race."

"Possibly a little rough, but civil to strangers; and a trifling service rendered to the child of one has made many my friends."

"Go, then," said Cleveland; "but take care of yourself. Your success last night was immense, and but for my title, you would have been the lion of the party. The old ladies in particular are loud in their praises of your politeness. I rather suspect you are going to eat some of Mrs. Gibbs's 'royal pudding, with

which his majesty was graciously pleased to express his satisfaction, causing it to be advertised, and which she now makes from the same recipe for parties visiting the island,' as says her card."

CHAPTER IV.

"Adventures are to the adventurous!"

D'Israeli, Jun.

Descending the Nothe on the opposite side, Gordon climbed to the Look-out, and then, cutting across the fields, took the nearest road to the ferry. The wind blowing from the south-west, the water between the projecting cliff crowned by Sandsfot Castle, and the Pebble, or Chesil Beach, (for it is known by either name,) was comparatively calm, and the greatest inconvenience in passing the ferry arose from the spray dashing over from the open sea beyond the pebbly ridge. The ferrymen, on learning his wish to see the West Bay in its glory, insured him from disappointment,

predicting a fearful storm; a prediction, judging from the increasing violence of the wind, likely to be fulfilled; and marvelled among themselves how one who might enjoy the shelter of a roof and the comfort of a chimney-corner should venture forth on such a day for pleasure.

Alas, that all should prize that highest which is not theirs!

To those who do not know Weymouth and its environs it may be necessary to devote a few lines of description; but we will be as brief as possible, disliking the weariness of explanation as much as our readers.

Within sight of the Nothe, but a little to the right, lies the island of Portland. No matter its size—who could ever remember the number of square miles?—but its line of coast presented to the view from that situation shows to the inexperienced eye but trifling inequalities and no very magnificent extent. The end of this line nearest to Weymouth slopes down

in picturesque declivities, clothed with short grass and interspersed with a few rocks, almost to the water's edge. Nearly in the centre stands the small, irregular village of Chesil, with its low battlemented castle, scarcely ornamental, whilst of its usefulness few pretend to speak,—perhaps because few can discover it. Immediately above the village rises a steep and rocky road, edged by several quarries, leading to the top of the island, and not particularly pleasant to ascend, either on foot or in the jolting cars of the natives drawn by wretched-looking though strong horses. The traveller who undertakes the ascent should be in the mood for a frolic. That the beauties of the island will amply repay the trouble of exploring, we leave for the guide-books to assert. This is a tale, and not a geographical or statistical account; so we shall merely say, we certainly did not repent making the excursion. The quantity of Portland stone exported is very considerable; and the numerous vessels em-

ployed in the trade are generally anchored in a small and tolerably secure harbour on one side of the village. Other vessels, more particularly those proceeding to or from Weymouth, occasionally remain a short time in the roadstead for temporary shelter, or for other reasons; but the number assembled is rarely very great. The houses in the village, nearly all small, are built of rough stone, with little regularity; some approaching close to the water's edge. Forming the further side of the little harbour, extending at a right angle from the village, and cutting, as it were, this view of the island in two, runs the Chesil Beach; a high ridge of shingles, banking the western sea from the main land of Dorsetshire, and running parallel to it with a narrow channel of water between. The bank decreases in height and breadth till, at a distance of some miles, the pebbles having gradually diminished to little more than sand, it ceases to appear above the waves. That portion of the island lying

beyond the beach is composed of precipitous rocks of shadowy masses and picturesque forms, generally of a deep dusky red near the village, but of duller hues with occasional light streaks in the distance, and falling abruptly on the horizon.

When the ferry-boat had landed Gordon on the other side of the gully or stream dividing the beach from the main land, he picked his way over the rough shingly ground, interspersed with pools of water, till nearly midway between the ferry and the island, before he climbed the pebbly ridge which concealed from his view the open sea. The scene then bursting on him amply repaid his toil, though the increasing power of the wind barely permitted him to stand.

The beach, sloping gradually, and extended by uneven sandy ground interspersed with pools and rushes towards the main land, falls more precipitously, and descends directly into deep water on the opposite side. A low line

of coast, dimly seen, at all times, from distance, and now scarcely perceptible through mist and spray, terminated, rather than contracted, this view on the right; whilst the rocky end of the island, sufficiently near to allow the eye to mark the bold jutting crags and romantic forms of its cliffs, bounded the scene on its left. Before him, as far as the gaze could reach, without rock, or cliff, or lowland coast, lay the wide and open sea. Some may think at first, a rock for the waves to dash against would enhance the grandeur of the view; but only look from that bare beach for one short five minutes, with the wind driving on towards the shore the mass of tide, even on such a day as will not refuse a female footing, and I am much mistaken if any wish for rock or headland. The fretful or furious sea rushing on against some giant rock with mighty sound and force, its dark mass breaking from the shock into small and crested waves, half retreating, as it were, with the sullen murmur of disap-

pointment, or sheeting the immovable rock with a shower of glittering spray, is a fine and spirit-stirring scene. It speaks to the observer of a glorious warfare—of a combat between two mighty foes; a struggle for life or death, and the spectator forgets in the excitement, that the struggle and the shock have endured for ages, and may endure to eternity, unless a Power above the force of rock or sea should proclaim His will. That is a scene for the youthful warrior on the morning of the day which is to behold him fighting, not for wealth or fame;—the one, the dross of earth; the other, the vain breath of man;—but to free or save his country from a foreign yoke—his hearth from desolation, his altar from pollution. There is life,—there is hope—strong, mighty hope, in such a scene. It can calm the heart and nerve the arm: it speaks of conquest—it rouses the mind to action.—Not so the scene extended before Walter Gordon. There was, as we have said, neither rock nor headland to

dash against — no vestige of a combat or a struggle — nothing to conquer or be conquered —no thought—no hope of change. The heart felt, without examining the source or the justice of the feeling, that such as it then was, such would it be for ever. The combat, if such had been, was past: earth, if she had ever opposed, opposed no more; not a trace—a vestige of her power was to be seen. The sea rolled on in grand dark masses towards the beach, like some mighty flood none could check, none could control—as you could fancy it had rolled at that awful time when an outraged God commissioned it to overwhelm the earth — to overthrow sin and its doers. You might fancy it had not forgotten the tremendous power with which it had been then endowed, but rolled on still in the pride of its might, mocking at the vain thought that man should think to ride its waves — to guide a helm across its bosom.

The tide was coming in,—not with the long

smooth waves and crested edge, one following the other, with which it advances on a level sandy shore — not with the short pointed waves breaking on a coast thick set with rocks; —it showed neither the soothing gentleness of the one, nor the fretful bustle of the other. Large, dark, undulating furrows, edged with white, were seen in the distance as far as the mist and spray permitted the eye to mark, sometimes broken into smaller waves from concussion; but the great mass of the dark sea came on towards the beach comparatively smooth, in swells rather than waves, as though the whole flood were pouring on by one wide consent; rising gradually as it neared, till, towering above the high ridge at the distance of forty or fifty yards, and drawing back for an instant every tiny wave still lingering on the beach, and standing as a wall of water, it poured down like some mighty cataract, streaming over the precipitous shingles in falls of a lighter green crested with foam, sending from

the shock a broad sheet of feathery spray far over the steep into the stiller water on the other side.

Gordon was subdued — the restless excitement of the morning calmed before this mighty flood. What was man amid such a scene? What were the strivings and the hopes of his feeble heart to the power — the shock of the ocean? He was nothing—his hopes less than nothing!—man alone could not stand against the ocean's fury—he felt the folly of the struggle. That ocean was as an assured and accustomed conqueror—nothing less than the Will of Eternity could have made it thus.

When the view first burst upon him, it seemed as if he stood in the more immediate presence of the Creator — that His power showed more plainly in the flood—His voice was heard more clearly in its roar. The young man's cheeks blanched from awe—his eyes were riveted on the advanced mass—he ceased to breathe as the wall of waters stood before him, and

when it poured its torrents on the beach, he bowed before its power. It was a sight to humble pride — to awaken humility — to abash human learning — to lower human reason; passion was overwhelmed — a master-spirit of the earth bowed beneath a mightier spirit still, shamed into its real littleness.

He who could stand there unmoved at such an hour might pass through life without a shock — his heart endure no pang; but then neither could it thrill to life's higher, hólier hopes! His mind would never suffer from the conflict of deep thoughts; but neither could it delight in the power and glory of the Infinite! Such must be one of the common herd — the mechanical drudges of existence — the earthenware of society. Alas! if the porcelain is more beautiful, is it not also more brittle? There is more equality in the world in the distribution of the great and the little than we always choose to think.

It was some time before Gordon raised his head to take a minuter survey of the sublime

beauty of the scene. When he did so, there was a holy calm—a subdued energy in look and manner, which showed the last few moments had not been idly spent.

No shower had as yet fallen near, though a thick haze in the distance looked to the inexperienced eye of the stranger like rain rather than mist; but from the very edge of the horizon rose dark clouds in heavy masses of an inky hue, occasionally softened at the edges, or breaking to give glimpses of a lighter sky beyond, as they changed in shape or shifted in position, driven on by the still-increasing wind. Sheltering himself behind the ridge, Gordon lay for some time with his head only above the beach watching the raging sea or changing heavens; and then deeming it prudent to be within reach of defence from the storm, he walked on till near the village of Chesil, still keeping the tranquil side of the bank, and joined a group of sturdy Portlanders with their grave and singular-looking dogs.

However the storms may have stunted and withered the few trees on the island, (and the miserable things they dignify by the name might generally furnish cause for jest to a forester,) they certainly have not stinted the stature or withered the strength of its human inhabitants. A finer race of men, women, and children, can scarcely be found. They are rather strong than elegant, as might be expected; but the large, dark, flashing or languishing eyes of the women and children (for there are splendid specimens of both), may well redeem a little extra size of limb. We shall not weary our readers with descanting on the distinctions between them and the peasantry of the main land, nor pretend to decide from what ancient race they are descended, but simply say, that they appear to strangers a blunt, yet honest and warm-hearted race, of rather amphibious habits; whilst report proclaims them to be kind friends, or bitter foes.

Of their daring, none who have seen the sea

breaking on the beach during or after a storm, and beheld the treasures they have snatched from its terrors, can entertain a doubt.

Their dogs equal, if not exceed them in peculiarity. To us they seemed to bear a slight resemblance to the Dane in make, only larger and stronger, with rougher hair; generally spotted or mottled with black or deep blue, with occasionally larger and more decided marks. They are trained from their birth to assist their masters in their fishing excursions, and in the recovery of the treasures engulphed "by the world of waters." Whether this early education or the honest pride of being useful makes them more sedate than most other dogs, or whether it is their nature, we know not; but in those we saw sitting up by their masters' sides, just returned from a successful fishing expedition, and apparently watching the proper disentanglement of the fish from the loaded net, we fancied an undue gravity of deportment—a something like self-importance. There was no fawning, no

running, no play: indeed, they looked cross, showing their white teeth if strangers sought to make friends with them.

Gordon was greeted by those he joined with more than civility—with grateful warmth; for one was Robert, the father of the boy to whom he had rendered assistance a few days before in a fall over a cliff, and some of the others were his relations—all his friends, or supposed to be so. It is said the islanders like to marry with islanders; thus drawing the bonds of relationship and friendship closer among the little community, whose occupations are almost confined to fishing and quarrying. Even Robert's dog seemed to feel the stranger had rendered some service to his master, and put his nose in the most friendly manner into Gordon's hand, who rewarded the courtesy with a piece of biscuit.

"Will the vessels be safe in the harbour, should the storm increase, as you expect?" asked Gordon of Robert.

"No fear there, sir, please God: nothing but the loss of an anchor or a few spars. They are sheltered."

"Then we may hope the tempest will be harmless in these parts at least, for there is no vessel on this side the beach," remarked Gordon.

"Maybe, or maybe not," replied the man bluntly. "Jem and I thinks we can see tall bare masts there sometimes through the mist and spray."

Gordon looked anxiously in the direction of the pointed finger, but, seeing nothing, was inclined to doubt the accuracy of the man's sight, when the changing light confirmed his assertion. A sudden gust cleared away the haze and murky vapours from a small space, and for a few brief moments the rays of the sinking sun silvered the edge of a dark cloud, forming it like a maiden's pall, and glancing down on the boiling sea below, traced on its surface a narrow flickering path of light. In

this path was distinctly visible to the observers the black hull and tall bare masts of a stately vessel driving swiftly towards the beach; and more than one asserted another was to be seen bearing in the same direction, a little to the right. The dark cloud passed again before the sun, but the clearing caused by the gust still allowed them occasional glimpses of the vessel.

"What has she to expect?" asked Gordon, after all had been watching her for some time in silence.

"She must go down, sir," replied Robert with the cold determined tone of one certain of the truth of his assertion, and too familiar with wreck to deem it more than a common accident of life.

Gordon shuddered. There was something more than commonly dreadful in such a doom, so coolly pronounced. "May none be saved?" he demanded eagerly.

"Impossible, sir. If it was in the night, one might think she had mistaken the lights,

and would try to tack when she found herself wrong, though I doubt it would be too late; but being day she cannot be coming of her own freewill. See! one mast is gone, and she pitches dreadfully. If the ship minded her helm, she would not be driving on for the beach."

"Is there no hope then?" inquired Gordon still more anxiously, for his was not a mind to contemplate the sufferings of his fellow-men unmoved.

"Hope? Ay, a quiet home and a speedy settling! — this wreck will give food to our fish and families for many a day," observed the man called by the others Jem.

Gordon turned round on the speaker. The sneer still lingered on his lip, and there was a down look about him that disgusted his observer.

"It is a fearful thing for man to pass from life with no loving voice to soothe, no friendly arm to aid,—with dark waves rushing and roar-

ing all around—the swimmer's art of no avail—the outworn strength fading, failing—the writhing frame struggling till the flood flows over him. It is an awful thing to pass from life at any time, but doubly so in such an hour—in such a scene as this. To stand before his Maker without one hour's calm to breathe the prayer —to commune with his sinful heart. This is no cause for idle jest," remarked Gordon gravely, shocked at the speaker's levity.

The man felt rebuked; but his was not a spirit to submit or turn.

"Jest or no jest, I said the truth. The sea is our land, the winter our time for harvest; but we need not build barns as others do. It is no strange thing to die; and what is one man's lot to-night, may be another man's to-morrow."

"It may —look to it!" replied Gordon with solemnity; for the man's anticipation of profit from the violent death of the many, and his mocking at their fate, now when the tempest

seemed the messenger of Almighty wrath, struck him as fraught with a more than common impiety.

The man glared on him fiercely, but his muttered words were not distinguishable: his eye sank beneath Gordon's steady gaze, and with a livid lip and troubled look he walked to a little distance.

"She drives on still, but not as quickly as at first," observed Robert after some minutes' silence, for all had been awed by Gordon's manner.

"Then is there hope for her now?" demanded Walter.

"No, no; only she rides the waves less lightly. The sea will have her! she must go down!"

"Should she gain the beach?"—asked Gordon doubtfully.

"She will not:—or if she should, it is all one—she would be dashed in pieces. Her crew will sail in no other ship."

"And is there really no hope? Can nothing be done to save her?"

"Lull the wind and still the sea," said Robert with an ironical coolness that showed his opinion.

Gordon murmured something of a boat.

"Boat!" repeated Robert; "who would launch her, and who could sail her?" pointing to the heavy surf, and the raging waves beyond, whilst a smile only saved by gratitude from being a sneer curled his lip at the stranger's fancied ignorance. "To be sure, we have dared the surf before now for gold—but not till the storm was passed, and then linked arm-in-arm."

"And must we stand here and see them die, and yet make no attempt to save them?" demanded Gordon, every feature portraying the agony which his noble spirit felt at inactivity when others were in peril.

"You had better go to my cottage, sir—you are not used to these things," observed Robert,

who, blunted himself by long use and daring habits to the dangers of the sea, did not read the stranger's words correctly. "You are not like us; your frame is too slight to bide the storm." Gordon turned on him an indignant look.

"I beg pardon, sir," said Robert respectfully, stepping back a pace: "there are few gentlemen would stay here at such a time."

"None worthy the name would retire whilst service might be rendered; and though my frame may seem slight in your eyes, it can bear storms and hardships. I shun no peril, if any can be saved."

"I know that by my boy, sir; but we Portlanders are rough speakers: I meant no offence."

"And I take none," answered Gordon frankly. "This is no moment for the indulgence of man's pride," he added with a glowing cheek that spoke himself rebuked.

"Could a boat from the vessel live in this

sea?" again questioned Gordon after another pause.

"Impossible! They could scarcely launch one. See! the ship is driven furiously towards the beach, and now whirled round by those meeting waves. How she pitches! she cannot rise on the wave!—five minutes more and she will go down, we shall have seen the last of her!"

All eyes were more intently fixed on the hapless vessel. She did indeed pitch fearfully; and instead of riding on the top of the long dark furrows, rolled helplessly into their hollows. A cross sea struck her bows—those on shore thought they saw her stagger beneath the shock. The surf rose higher—a sheet of blinding spray obscured the sight for some moments. When they looked again, the vessel was no longer there, and a wailing cry, only low from the distance and the ocean's roar, came on their ears.

"It is all over!" said several; some in the quiet tone of habitude, some with an exaltation

of the voice resembling triumph. Did those last, overlooking the death of many, think of the treasure that the wreck might bring them?

Gordon shuddered. All then had gone to stand before their Maker! There was no more time for trial or probation. Age and youth —the sinewy and the feeble — the prattling child, the robust man, and the tender maiden— the sad and the light-hearted — the suffering and the happy — the loved and the unloved, had all gone down to their long and dreamless rest in that one moment! His companions had talked of a crowded deck—and yet their fate could be announced with scarce a changing of the voice! He turned to look on those around him. In the countenances that met his view (some turned away) there was neither levity nor triumph; they were not rejoicing at the filling of their treasure-house, the sea, as Jem had done, but, while he felt that his own cheek was blanched, the healthful colour, though perhaps a little lessened, still lingered

upon theirs. He felt his sympathies were with the dead rather than the living, and turned again to look upon the sea.

The vessel had gone down in a line before them, though at some distance, and in that direction his eyes naturally turned again. Suddenly his gaze became more fixed and earnest, and a vivid glow came on his blanched cheek.

"Is not that a boat? There! there! do you not see?" he demanded almost breathless with emotion, grasping Robert's arm with convulsive force, and directing his attention with the other hand to the object that riveted his own eager gaze.

"I see something dark — maybe a piece of the wreck: if a boat, it cannot live in this sea," replied the man, impatient at the continued doubt of his repeated assertions; then perceiving his words had caused disappointment, he continued with more feeling and some curiosity, — "Are any of your friends on board, sir, that you seem so anxious?"

"No; I neither know the vessel, nor have I, to my knowledge, a friend upon the sea. But must we not feel for all who suffer?"

"Maybe so with the rich; but we poor rough people have to think of making our bread and other things, and can't vex about strangers," said the man, relapsing into his former indifference when assured that the preserver of his boy had no personal interest in the preservation of the vessel or her crew. "I have seen many a good ship go down in my time, and been near lost myself; but I never looked white for that. It is what we must all come to some time or other: as well die on the water as on the land. But you are younger; and maybe I minded it more myself when I was but a lad. If there were friends or Portlanders aboard now, it would be a different matter."

Gordon did not rebuke his selfishness, he did not look on the speaker, for his anxiety, become so intense as to amount to pain, pre-

vented his turning his straining gaze from the sea; but he withdrew his grasp from the arm of the islander and stood alone. None felt with him, none would aid him; but his hopes and his prayers were with that boat—and, if need should be, his strength should second his generous thoughts.

Perhaps he did the Portlanders injustice; he did not make sufficient allowance for the blunting and narrowing effects of penury and a confined sphere of action. The affections of islanders and of members of small communities, confined to a small circle, are usually intense within its limits; but beyond its bounds, with the sufferings and acts of the general mass of mankind they have comparatively little sympathy.

"Boat or raft, she rides it bravely," remarked one of the men.

"That does she, but she will not near the shore; or should she, her crew will be dashed against the shingles," said another.

Boat or raft, whichever she might be (the former, Gordon was fully convinced), she did indeed ride the billows bravely; now on high plainly to be distinguished; now sinking down hid from their view in the deep furrow, only to rise on its ridge again. Gordon's interest became more intense the longer the struggle lasted. He saw her conquer wave after wave, urged on by her gallant crew; he saw her climb and rest for a moment on the top of a crested wave higher than any she had as yet surmounted; he could almost fancy there was triumph in her look; he saw her sink in the wave's deep furrow, as he had seen her sink before, and he watched—eagerly watched to see her mount on the crest of the succeeding billow. He watched in vain!—a wild shriek, the voice of the mingled agony of many, was distinctly heard (for the boat had made considerable progress towards the land), but the eye never rested on her dark form again.

"She is gone! Poor fellows!" said Robert

with a hard, deep breath, but no other token of emotion.

Gordon hoped—ay, even after that fearful scream, till hope became a mockery. The hands that had been extended towards the boat, as though to promise aid or welcome, concealed his face, and he turned away with a groan from the engulphing sea.

The men talked together for a time concerning the wreck; some said she came from one land, some from another, but all agreed that she was a large three-masted vessel with a numerous crew, and it was predicted many bodies would be washed on shore. The course of the second vessel was but guessed at from the distance and the mist; some thought her advancing, some retreating.

"Will you come to my cottage, sir?" said Robert at length in friendly civility, if not in sympathy. "The storm is getting wilder—we can scarcely keep our feet even on this side

the beach, and you can do no good biding here."

The man said truly; but before Gordon assented to the proposition, he bent a searching look on the raging flood before him. The storm was indeed growing wilder every moment, the gusts of wind more frequent and furious, the surf higher and in greater volume, whilst the sea beyond looked like an immense boiling caldron heated by subterraneous fires. The clouds became darker and heavier; occasionally a faint light played along their gloom, succeeded by the rumbling of distant thunder, and some large drops of rain fell on the upturned face; but the fury of the tempest was not to be vented in a shower. Added to this, the duskiness of twilight was approaching, the storm aiding the season in closing in the day. The whole party had been lying down on the safer side of the ridge, with their heads only raised above the summit since

the going down of the boat; but they now rose, most of them, like the stranger, turning towards the open sea.

"Look! look!—what is that?" asked Gordon eagerly, again seizing Robert's arm and pointing to a dark speck on the top of a wave within a short distance of the beach.

"A body bound to a spar, I should think," replied the person questioned, after a keen investigation.

"I felt it!" exclaimed Gordon, drawing a deep breath, as if the occurrence harmonised with some secret feeling, springing at the same time to the top of the ridge.

"What would you do?" asked Robert as he sprang to his side.

"Do? Save him, if Heaven permit!"

"It is madness to think of it!" said Robert, laying hold of his cloak. "The man must be a corpse long before this, and you will die for no good. Were the surf but half as high, even we could not venture without ropes and linking

arms; and you, stout swimmer as I know you, and bold heart, could not escape."

"I will try!" said Gordon, unclasping his cloak, and stripping off coat, waistcoat, and shoes, his eyes still fixed on the advancing spar.

"If you could bring the body to land, there would be no life in it," again urged Robert. "Let the sea take it back and give it a grave."

"A hand is raised! — there is life still!" shouted Gordon triumphantly.

"Only raised by a wave," replied Robert earnestly. "It would be madness to go. You shall not stir!" And the Portlander laid a strong grasp on his arm.

"Shall a fellow-man be in danger, and I not seek to save him? Back! Detain me not!" And breaking with a violent effort from his wondering and awed retainer, Gordon sprang desperately down the shingly steep.

However daring, nay rash, might be the act, it was not undertaken without prudent fore-

sight. Gordon's eye had not for a moment been withdrawn from the object he sought to succour; he had measured distance, counted moments, and his well-timed advance was just at the instant when the volume of water rolling on towards the beach, and bearing the spar upon its surface, broke with a thundering shock against the shingly barrier; its wild waves dancing up the bank, and its spray from the concussion and the wind falling into the calmer water on the other side. He marked the plank in its approach till it nearly touched the beach; then, before it could be drawn back by the receding wave, with a strong bound he sprang through the surf and grasped the cord that tied the body to the spar. Happily for him, the Portlander's dog, with the instinct of his race, and a friendly feeling towards himself, sprang forward at the same moment, and succeeded in fixing his teeth in the clothes of the man on the other side. Even with this assistance, the madness of the attempt was forced

on the experience of the gallant Gordon. Good swimmer as he was, with a heart that did not quail at the peril he now fully understood, and with a coolness that enabled him to see and profit by every possible advantage, he felt that his own strength alone would be scarcely equal to the task. In vain he struggled with the assistance of the dog to drag the body up the beach—the power of the now retreating wave was too strong for their mingled efforts to overcome, and Gordon felt himself and the body he had half secured sucked back into the dark abyss.

"Leave go and save yourself, and I will help!" shouted Robert at his loudest pitch of voice, whilst he inwardly raged against the folly of the attempt.

The words came to Gordon's ear mingled with the roar of wind and wave, and the crashing of the waters that seemed rushing in upon him as if greedy for, and glorying in, their prey. With all his efforts he sank beneath the surface more than once, and the sea

rushed into his mouth and ears. He knew it was a struggle between life and death, but he never thought of quitting his hold, for he fancied he had heard a feeble moan; and the gallant dog would not desert him. There was a hope, could he keep himself up for a few moments, of being borne forward again on the next wave, and, aided by his own endeavours, thrown upon the beach. The next wave came, and once more strong in hope, he felt himself and his charge borne on it towards the ridge, and merely buoying himself up, he retained his strength till the moment when one powerful effort might place him beyond the power of the retreating tide. But the sea seemed mocking at his peril and his hopes. Instead of advancing far up the steep ere pouring down its broken floods, it did not even wait to break till it had reached its foot, so that its fall did but hurl him down into the deep water.

"Fool! madman!" muttered Robert; "he will live or die with that body!" But he did

not the less for his anger make an effort to save him.

His voice encouraged the dog to maintain his hold; whilst, hastily throwing off his outer garments, and aided by the others, a rope accidentally brought by one of the party was fastened firmly round him, the other end being held by his companions. Thus prepared, he stood as low on the steep as prudence would warrant, ready to act with promptness and vigour at the fitting moment.

Bruised by the concussion—weakened by his efforts—hope nearly dead within him, though Gordon still maintained his hold of the body, his failing strength permitted little more exertion. Again was he sucked back by the receding wave far into the boiling bosom of the deep, that seemed to open a passage to receive him; and then, as if weary of its guest, or compelled by a Higher Power to disgorge its prey, the sea threw him forward again with the advancing flood. He rose on the crest of a wave

higher than any that had preceded it—the wave broke as the former ones had broken, dashing him in its fall some way up the steep. His feet touched the shingles—he made a violent effort to throw himself forward, but his failing strength was unequal to the task. Again would the receding tide have borne him back in its retreat, and the flood received him into its depths without a chance of life, had not Robert with a sudden bound fixed on him a powerful grasp, calling to his companions at the same time to draw in the rope. There was a brief struggle, for the waters seemed loth to yield their victim, and then all were safely lodged on the opposite side of the beach, though the sea ran up the steep to its very ridge in pursuit of its prey.

"Does he live?" murmured Gordon in a low tone, as he lay on the beach faint and exhausted, grasping the rough hand of the Portlander with a friendly pressure that spoke his sense of his service.

"Ay, ay, I hope so!" replied the sturdy

islander at a venture, seeing the other's heart was set upon it.

"Thank Heaven, one life has been saved!" said Gordon, sinking down on the shingles, from which he had partly raised himself to look upon the body.

The preserved and his preserver were taken to the small but clean inn, and received every care that the Portlander and his family could bestow; whilst the kind-hearted landlady bustled about with judicious zeal. Though bruised and suffering, when his strength was a little recruited, no persuasions could prevent Gordon from watching by the side of the rescued man, who, though living, was for some hours scarcely sensible of his providential escape. The having risked his own life for his, created a powerful interest in his fate. The young man looked upon him in some sort as his own peculiar property — a charge committed to his care—and watched over him with the tenderest anxiety.

For many hours the storm raged with unabated fury, and when Gordon walked forth on the morrow his feeling heart was deeply shocked. The wind and the sea had done their appointed work! half of the village was overthrown. Of the cottages close to the water, some were in ruins—the gardens of all destroyed—the villagers without a shelter from the winter's cold, save under the roofs of others. The sea had washed far up into the village, but the powerful exertions of the men had prevented loss of life. The beach exhibited a still more sad and impressive scene. Upwards of one hundred dead bodies were lying there, a melancholy proof of the tempest's power. Of all who had crowded the gallant vessel they had seen go down, but one survived—owing his life, under Providence, to him.

But one Portlander had perished! His body was on the beach—it had been thrown up about mid-day. It was the body of Jem,—blunt Jem, as some used to call him; and the foreign-

looking box held tightly in the death-grasp told why he had died. His treasure-house, the sea, had been his grave, though it gave up its dead to warn others by his fate. One of those from whose death he had anticipated profit lived—but he had died!

A more singular fate attended the second vessel seen in the distance; a strong-built schooner fully laden. She had driven on before the wind during the darkness, her crew unable to direct her course, and anticipating wreck and death. As she approached the beach (all expecting her instant striking) a tremendous wave raised her far out of the depth, and, bearing her on its crest over the ridge, launched her in safety in the water on the other side. Not a life was lost—not a hair was hurt, and in a few days she pursued her voyage! Such an escape had never occurred before—might never occur again. With equal chance for life, the one had gone down into the fathomless sea, whose secrets none can tell—

the other had been preserved by little short of miracle. Who shall faint — who shall be strong? The storm works not its own will! it strikes, or it spares, as a Higher Power ordains! Does man ask why these things are? Why one is spared, and one is struck? Can the finite comprehend the Infinite—the mortal the Eternal? Let man now bow beneath the stroke and believe its wisdom — hereafter he shall know it! Who that had looked upon that sea the following week could have deemed it the agent of such fearful suffering?

The wind was hushed — the water lulled in its mighty cradle—its surface smooth as a summer sea—its waves, advancing with a gentle and graceful swell, broke with a soothing murmur on the shingly beach, as if paying homage, not asserting rule. Fair forms coquetted with the dancing spray, laughing lightly when the less nimble foot was laved; or gentle woman's eye swam in the lustre of her heart's pity, as the ear heard the history of the

past. It was a tale of woe and wonder; and the light laugh was hushed, and the late admiring eye looked with distrust upon the faithless sea. Another week, and the tale was forgotten, or its wonders superseded by some newer marvel. The suffering felt is long remembered—the suffering only seen or heard of is soon forgotten.

CHAPTER V.

Mésalliance—mettre du fumier sur ces terres.
Tour of the German Prince.

"Your travelling-carriage at the door! your valet with his hat fresh brushed! Whither go you, Clanellon?" inquired the Honourable Philip Garrow, as he entered his lordship's morning-room, forming one of a suite in his father's house in town.

"To Fairport on speculation!" replied Viscount Clanellon, whilst the expression of his handsome features showed plainly how little the intended excursion was to his taste.

"To Fairport on speculation!" repeated his friend in surprise.

"To Fairport on speculation!" repeated the viscount coolly.

"Oh, I understand now. I hear the stud is valuable, and have half a mind to ask you to take me with you."

"I must ask my papa's leave first," replied his lordship in increasing ill-humour, though pretending to jest.

"Ask your papa's leave? If you did, it would be for the first time this many a year!"

"No scandal, Garrow! I am the most dutiful and obedient of sons."

"Of course!" replied the other with much gravity. "But, jesting aside, for which horse do you intend to bid?"

"I intend to bid for no horse."

"Then what in the name of all the exclusives can induce you to quit town in the full splendour of the season, when each morning promises a *déjeúner à la fourchette*, each evening *un bal costumé*?"

"Mamma says I always catch cold at the

first; and aunt Jane declares the second to be all vanity."

The speaker's tone and manner were irresistible, and Garrow laughed aloud; but his companion retained his gravity and his ill-humour.

"But why go to Fairport? It is not feeding-time yet — the merchants do not banquet till September."

"I go on business, and expect to be taken in as a partner in one of the great houses."

"Charles Winton Clanellon, Viscount Clanellon—the most elegant of the elegant, the most fascinating of the fascinating, turn merchant!" exclaimed Garrow in amaze. "Pooh! this is but idle jest, though announced so gravely: and as for taking you in, the whole mercantile corps could not do that."

"It is no jest; such is my doom!"

"Indeed! Then you vegetate for life at Fairport?"

"No. If I survive the month of probation,

I conclude I shall go a tour: *c'est selon les règles.*"

"A northern tour?"

"Perhaps."

"Admirable! So the terms of the intended partnership are to be arranged at Gretna?"

"No such luck! I should then be spared the *ennui* of making love and settlements, and receiving the congratulations of one's thousand and one friends. Nay, I might succeed in having the marriage dissolved on the plea of illegality."

"I do not understand this mystery, Clanellon. Will it pleasure you to enlighten me?"

"You are dull of comprehension this morning. I have stated plain and simple truths. The Earl of Brackenbury has ordered his son to go to Fairport — woo, win, and wed a merchant's daughter; and his son obeys his order."

"Simply as a point of filial duty?"

"Of course."

"And what will Lady Susan Crampton say?"

"Hang Lady Susan Crampton!" exclaimed Clanellon, rising abruptly and pacing up and down the room in wrath. "She is a heartless coquette, or she and her fortune would have been mine some two years since."

"And she dying of a broken heart. The world calls her prudent and high-principled."

"How long has the world called things by their right names? And had I been left heir to my rich cousin, would she have refused, or the world applauded her refusal? Yet my vices and follies would remain the same. What then? The world will swallow any pill, do but gild it enough. Lady Susan Crampton is a cold, calculating coquette, requiring neither chancellor nor guardian to protect her property."

"Then you really were refused?" said Garrow with pretended simplicity, taking this opportunity of venting his annoyance at hav-

ing been formerly supplanted in the lady's good graces by Clanellon.

"No! I did not afford her that triumph. Had she a heart to feel and I time to spare, she should be Lady Clanellon yet. Now I shall be out of the way, you had better try again, Garrow. Get your uncle to settle his riches upon you, your elder brother to die, and you may succeed."

"Thank you for the advice. I read the lady's character long since, or should not have yielded the *pas* to you," replied Garrow, biting his lip to conceal his annoyance.

"Your early discrimination was fortunate, and of course saved you from disappointment," remarked Clanellon with an impertinence that could not but gall, yet with a quiet carelessness that scarcely warranted retort.

This play of *coúte qui coúte* was not uncommon between them; yet for reasons felt, though not proclaimed, they always maintained the semblance of friendship, and Garrow

contented himself with turning the conversation.

"What has fixed the choice on this trading scheme? I am impatient to know the 'why and because.'"

"They might be guessed. Fortune, forgetting to be fickle, has been against me for months. Dice, horses, women, (the smiles of the latter were ever won by glitter,) have all combined to beggar me. The Jews refused to lend; and a conscientious friend, purely out of a love for morality, opened the budget to my father, who not admiring the exposé, is little inclined to provide the ways and means. If two gamble and spend, the one in power and possession talks virtue, and refuses to grant supplies, that he may force reform. Fathers and sons should take different lines. I must pay the penalties of my folly forsooth, and wed with the merchant's daughter, the unlucky appendage to her wealth. The prudent papa, it seems, will not

make advances without being sure of a return; but, having a fancy for a lord as a son-in-law, will barter his solid gold for the tinsel of a title. A coronet is a dazzling bauble, it must be allowed."

"And you really wed the merchant's daughter?"

"*Qui vivra verra!* I go to woo her like a good boy, as my father bids me; and her parent shall admit the witchery of my wooing. If the lady will not have me, I cannot help it; but my part of the conditions being performed, I must receive the promised supply."

"A dutiful son truly! And you will submit to the shame of a refusal?"

"Oh, the world—my world! will understand the truth."

"And the earl too perhaps."

"He will not dispute her father's certificate of good behaviour."

"Suppose the poor thing should fall despe-

rately in love, or allow the charms of 'my lady' to blind her judgment? These country girls are always silly or cunning."

"I am no fool, whatever she may be, nor used to be thwarted!" And his look might have awed a republican senate.

"Suppose you should fall in love with her?"

"Viscount Clanellon love a plebeian!" replied his lordship with far more than sufficient scorn.

"Would it be the first time?" asked the other quietly.

"The first time a plebeian would have the option of becoming Lady Clanellon, though his lordship may have wasted a few flattering words."

"If you should be sunk nine fathoms deep?"

"If the moon should turn and mankind die from a sight of her second face, as the Mexicans believe!" replied his lordship, evidently annoyed at the supposition.

"'*Qui vivra verra!*' as you said just now. But what is the name of this highly-prized damsel?"

"I have not inquired: her father's is Robert Lyle."

"What! Florence Lyle? the only child of Robert Lyle of Atherton Hall, the greatest merchant of Fairport, whose riches report speaks it more difficult to enumerate than the stones at Stonehenge?"

"The same, I conclude. I could divide his riches, if not sufficient accountant to enumerate them."

"Lucky fellow!"

"Why? Is the girl giant or dwarf, mad or an idiot? If either, my bargain with my father is off. I protested against monsters; and only pretend to guide sensible people. I am no leader of fools!"

"Is that certain?"

"I leave you to decide. The world says you follow where I lead."

"How long has the world learned to call things by their right names? If rumour with her thousand tongues for once speaks truth, the girl is none of these."

"What then? sharp, short, and shrewish? Describe her, Garrow!"

"I scarcely know how to do that, for my informants have seemed too much dazzled by the whole to distinguish particulars: besides, their accounts vary. Meadows says she is the essence of French cookery: all rich and delicate tastes so skilfully amalgamated as to render the whole a splendid perfection, without the preponderance of any. But then Meadows is a gourmet, was feasted for ten days at the merchant's house, and having determined not to marry lest his wife should interfere in his favourite dishes, stood no chance of being piqued by the coolness of the lady, or the refusal of the father."

"A gilded nonentity—a mould of tasteless blanc-manger! Proceed!"

"Williams describes her as a stately palm in a sunny land; a delightful shade—a refreshment to the weary—an object of love and admiration. But then Williams has been in the East, and goes thither again with the promise of a situation through the merchant's interest; so he may well talk Eastern of the daughter."

"Large! dark! and gawky! with plebeian-sized extremities:"

'Pride in her movements, scorn upon her lips!'

Continue!"

"Whitby describes her as a stately pillar of stone—grand in her proportions, but without a soul—a goodly piece of propriety—a woman who speaks and thinks, but cannot feel, and has set her mind (heart she has not) on the splendour of a coronet. But then report says he is a rejected lover, and those rail who lose. To his taste, the companion is by far the more witching of the two."

"Ay, a very decent-looking, respectable, proper young woman, who will never commit a

scandal or furnish matter for a paragraph. A companion too! So the merchant's daughter must have a companion forsooth; and, priding herself on her wealth, can afford to have one not exactly a foil. Poor wretch! I know not whether to pity or despise her for accepting such a situation."

"According to Whitby, you may do neither, but admire. He bewailed more than once the blindness of Dame Fortune in not having bestowed her favours upon her, and asserted Julia Desmond was a being to be loved at sight."

"Julia Desmond!—a real novel name! Of course, after all my scorn, and going to wed the gorgeous mistress, I marry the poor companion. And Florence! what a grand designation! How can *la bella Fiorenza* endure the profanation? Her lofty palaces would fall upon, and crush her should she walk beneath them. Our wedding-tour shall be thither, if I

must submit. The ill-educated and half-genteel have no taste for simple nomenclature; they prefer the showy bead to the real pearl: in fact, they cannot have a simple taste."

"And you admire simple tastes, Clanellon?"

"Yes, in a young fair girl of sixteen summers."

"Insipid forms of flesh! I have heard you call them. Emanations of the nursery!"

"Once; but I have some thoughts of turning reformer."

"Radical, I hope?" said his friend pointedly.

"Yes, I patronise extremes; they are amusing. But what do your common-place friends say of this Florence Lyle? Your descriptions have hitherto partaken of Eastern vagueness. Is she tall or short, fair or dark, plain or handsome, silly or sensible?"

"I cannot tell: some of these particulars I never heard, others I have forgotten, not intending to figure among the suitors of this

modern Portia. Ill-educated she is not; that is, she has been expensively taught, having been some years at Miss Taylor's."

"Worse and worse! She will be entertaining me with English-French; murdering Italian songs; mincing the superb Pasta; and apologising for pa's vulgarities."

"You are determined not to be pleased with her."

"Moreover, I am determined that she shall not be pleased with me. But go on."

"Some call her sensible, more vote her stupid; some think her plain, more handsome, but deficient in expression and animation; some praise her quiet, lady-like manners, more call that manner studied and cold. The very old, and the very young, appear to like her best; but in two points nearly all save those agree, namely, that she is chilling, unloveable, and ambitious of a coronet. No commoner has stood a chance; and he on whom she bestows most smiles is Lord Dunrayne, the son of the proud

Earl of Aggenthorpe, and brother to a favourite schoolfellow. This is the extent of my knowledge, an epitome of all the reports I can call to remembrance."

"Thanks! though the account promises ill. Her taste for a coronet may be embarrassing, and her coldness blunt her to slights. Has she a mother?"

"I think the poor lady died some few years since."

"The better for me: one parent's eyes are quite enough. And what of the father?"

"Rich, liberal, and boastful, I hear; with an unbounded love for his child, and a desire to be considered a man of taste."

"A vanity-bore! And the young lady's age?"

"Not of age, I believe."

"Alack-a-day! Mine is a sad fate; but I will conquer it. There will be time to arrange my plans during my solitary journey."

"And to smooth your ruffled mood, or your

intended father-in-law will scarcely give you a certificate of good behaviour," said Garrow, laughing.

"True! But for my temper, I might in a sense be 'monarch of all I survey.' If I choose, all see as I see; nay, I have sometimes made the infirmities of my temper serve my plans."

"Does Mr. Lyle, think you, know of your habits and embarrassments?"

"Not of the latter, I conclude, or he is not as cautious as I deem him: the former are but spirited follies in a young nobleman — they would be lamentable vices in a commoner."

"Must you start within an hour? I had some thoughts of offering to accompany you as far as Thorby, the next stage to Fairport."

"Come then, and save me from myself. I am only ordered to reach Fairport in time for dinner to-morrow; a late dinner we can make it."

And a late, a very late dinner it must have been, considering the usual feeding-time of the

neighbourhood; for what with lingering with his friend at Thorby, and other delays, it was nearly eight o'clock before the viscount's carriage passed through the first gate of Atherton Park.

However elegantly *nonchalant* and indifferent Lord Clanellon might be at other times, he did not scruple on the present occasion to prove his possession of that common-place feeling, curiosity, by looking from the carriage-window with no ordinary eagerness; and, setting aside other considerations, there was enough in the survey to awaken admiration and interest. It was a lovely evening of a lovely June: the rather oppressive heat of the day had cooled under a gentle breeze, and a few fleecy clouds were still to be seen floating over the clear sky; whilst in the west, a glorious sunset gave hope of as bright a morrow. The air was soft and balmy, yet refreshing; whispering gently among stately trees or graceful shrubs, and wafting round the fragrance of a thousand lovely flowers.

The birds showed no weariness from the day's labours, but poured forth richer notes than usual, as though the most witching strains had been saved for their evening song.

The broad, smoothly-gravelled and well-kept road wound through a noble park, well stocked with deer, beautiful with varying hill and dale, and rich in well-grouped clumps and hanging woods.

If there were no giants of the forest — no pride of centuries among those woods, there were many fine and lofty trees, whose admirable grouping prevented any idea of poorness in their shade; and look where you would, there was no symptom of decay. The house, seen in the distance, was just what should have been placed in such a park. It was not an ancient mansion to recall fading memories, and tell "a tale of the deeds of other years;" nor was it glaring in newness of splendour, shocking the prejudices of families of ancient date. Large, handsome, and well-proportioned, the

bright glare of the stone mellowed down to a pleasing hue, it stood forth in the pride of its stately portico and Ionic pillars with a calm and quiet dignity; to the eye of the fanciful, neither daring nor dreading criticism. It appeared to promise the pleasing hospitality of friendship, not the unsatisfying pomp of boastful show.

On whichever side he turned, in the discriminating eyes of Clanellon all things seemed to harmonise; and it was to this harmony the scene owed its greatest charm. There was no contrast of show and meanness — of the desire to shine and the dread to spend: you could not expect to find in the most secluded spot a heap of dead leaves and rubbish that should have been removed, and that, being left, proved the expense of removal. Some years back, when the new house was glaring in its whiteness, and the cradled trees gaunt in their slender height, Atherton Hall might have been accused of the impertinent look of parvenuism—the

pushing, yet servile forwardness of a *nouveau riche;* but malice itself could not have ventured on such a suggestion now. The look of newness, inviting criticism, had passed away: Atherton Hall had held its station among the surrounding seats too long to dread a censure; and the house, the park, the woods, the lodges, all and each spoke the high and palmy state of their owner. Not a withered leaf lay on the path, not a decayed branch thrust forth its warning nakedness: the observer felt convinced at a glance that Mr. Lyle was in the fulness of prosperity.

One would have thought a scene so beautiful, so rich in harmony, must bring pleasure to him who looked upon it; but the reverse was the fact. Annoyed at leaving town; with no taste for the country; detesting the idea of a union with trade, though allowing its merits when compelled to borrow; foreseeing (notwithstanding his self-confidence) some little trouble in avoiding the lady, yet entitling himself to his father's promised advance; unable

to look back with satisfaction or forward with pleasure, and thoroughly out of humour with himself, he had every possible inclination to be out of humour with all around him; and this very harmony was vexatious, as affording little cause for censure. It certainly is a hard, a very hard case—a positive misfortune—to discover nothing to blame when one is in a mood to find fault; but a person with a real genius for cavilling can scarcely be in this unhappy predicament: despite the Latin proverb one hears one's brothers quote, out of nothing such an one can make something come.

"This is not all the doing of himself or his daughter, though they may have altered a little. They have not purchased the place long," thought Clanellon: "or, if their work, its very harmonious uniformity proves the want of character in its possessors. I admire the striking, not the studied; and the very women who opened the gates seem to have been drilled into formality."

His ill-humour increased as the carriage ad-

vanced; and whatever might be his reception, it was evident it would not please him. He had been put in a fury at Thorby by hearing himself designated as the young lord come on a month's trial to see if Miss Lyle liked him; (which gratifying report must of course have been spread by the Lyles themselves:) — he arrived late on purpose to annoy—he was resolved to be impertinent. If met with friendly calmness, he would quarrel with being considered a merchant's fellow; if made a lion of, and annoyed by a bustle, he meant to sneer at the ill-bred fussiness of trade.

The carriage approached the door, and his quick eye caught the first signs of the anticipated bustle. The flowers in the portico were but half arranged; and the old man and his assistant looked vexed that the task was not completed; whilst, as they stooped to move some pots from the steps, he fancied he heard something about being in a hurry. The vexation of appearing impatient and being in a

hurry (though the accusation sounded rather strangely) was forgotten in the pleasure of finding, or putting the whole house in confusion. The time that elapsed before the bell was answered, was a convincing proof of his not being expected; and in the prospect of fretting others he stood some chance of forgetting his own ill-humour.

Instead of five or six domestics in splendid liveries, headed by the powdered butler, to assist him to alight and pass his name from hall to hall, one awkward-looking servant alone at length appeared, breathless and flushed, shouldering on his coat as he crossed the vestibule, who started at the sight of a carriage and four, and evidently meditated a retreat.

"Open the door!" exclaimed Clanellon in a tone admitting of neither dispute nor delay.

The valet let down the steps, whilst the footman stood at the half-open hall-door with a bewildered look.

"Master arn't at home, sir!" said the man, instead of showing any inclination to usher the guest into an apartment.

"Not at home!—where is he then?" inquired Clanellon in surprise and wrath.

"He's gone to Crolford, sir, and won't come back till to-morrow."

"What of that? Do you mean to keep me standing here all day? Show me into the drawing-room!"

The domestic seemed more flurried than before by the visitor's determined advance and evident anger. He took three steps to the right, four to the left, and then, as if suddenly remembering some prior instructions, turned round on Clanellon with a "Please, sir, what's your name?"

"Viscount Clanellon. Do you take me for a swindler, fool? Lead the way to the drawing-room!"

"Yes, sir!—yes, my lord!" replied the man with a terrified stare, again proceeding, and

again stopping, stammering out in an apologetic tone,—"Please, my lord, as how the workmen have been in the drawing-room; and Betsy and me was clearing up the litter. We 've a'most done."

"Show me somewhere else, then: you are not cleaning all the rooms, I suppose?"

"No, sir!—that is, my lord, here is one," throwing open the door of a small apartment, whose one window, having its blind completely down, afforded but a dull and dismal light.

"Tell Miss Lyle I am here!"

"Missis be'ant at home, please my lord."

It did not please my lord; and his look and tone showed that it did not.

"Is she gone to Crolford too?"

"Bless ye, no! she is a-walked down to the school; and then James said as how she was going to Parson Hopton's."

"Schools, and Parson Hopton's! I shall be questioned in spelling and catechism; bored with Watts and Crossman, Bell and Lancas-

ter!" thought the viscount. "Prussic acid will be my only alternative."

"When will dinner be ready?"

"Dinner! Lauk, my lord! why, it is past eight, and Miss have dined these five hours."

"Miss dine at three, and not wait my arrival!" thought the viscount again, with something between a shrug, a shudder, and a smile.

"Is there no one at home then?"

"Miss Desmond, my lord: I see'd her a while agone."

Clanellon hesitated; then, judging he should find little pleasure in his own society, and expecting more from venting his wrath and annoyance on the companion, he desired the servant to let her know he was there. How came it that the interior of the mansion showed such a contrast to the exterior? One was all harmony—the other all confusion. Not a thing was out of order in the park—not a thing was in order in the house. The cleaning the grand apartments, and the arranging the flowers,

some rare exotics, told of anxiety to do him honour and win his approval; whilst the absence of father and daughter, the dinner not delayed, and the single ill-mannered, ill-dressed domestic, treading with uncertain steps through the stately hall, with its noble staircase and marble pillars, showed utter indifference to his comfort and approbation. It seemed a braving of his criticism, an open show of ill manners and ill breeding. To arrive at any house, friends or foes—intimate or unknown, and to find the host and hostess out, always occasions a feeling of desolation and disappointment. It shows a want of tact, if not of feeling, from which Byron considers tact to spring, and betokens a deficiency in delicacy and friendly warmth which promises ill for the pleasure of the visit. Lord Clanellon considered it as an intended slight, and longed for the presence of some one on whom to vent his anger. He said truly, if he could have controlled his temper, he might have ruled all within his reach; but

though he could and did control it at times to attain some particular object, at others he had neither the will nor the power to bind it; and in the present instance, like Tam o'Shanter's wife,

"He nursed his wrath to keep it warm."

Whispering and succeeding footsteps in the hall made him expect the presence of Miss Desmond; but he only saw another domestic, whose dress and manner showed him of a higher grade.

"Miss Desmond will be here directly, and I have sent to let my young lady know of your arrival, my lord. I am sure my master will be very sorry that he was not at home," said the man respectfully. "Will your lordship please to have dinner? It shall be ready shortly."

"No!" replied Clanellon, vexed at the non-appearance of the companion, and little appeased by this address. "I want no dinner; let my bed be prepared directly."

"Go to bed now!" involuntarily escaped from the usually scrupulous domestic, in the height of his surprise: "my master and young lady will be back soon, my lord."

"Go to bed now, if I may be allowed to do as I like. Tell Le Val to see the bed is made as I wish, and let me know as soon as it is ready."

"Yes, my lord; but it will be some little time first," replied the wondering servant. "Would not you please to take tea or coffee?"

"I shall take both in bed."

"Yes, my lord;" and the man departed.

Clanellon paced the room in a fury; tried to draw up the blind, but could not succeed, twisting the lines in his awkward attempt; and then throwing himself on the sofa, took up a paper and endeavoured to read. His lips pronounced the words, but their meaning never entered his mind; and on the sound of approaching steps (he judged from their lightness a female's) he threw it down and pre-

pared to annoy. It was a female who entered the room; but the large wrapping shawl that enveloped her person, the enormous garden bonnet with its thick veil, joined to the darkness of the room, prevented his judging whether Miss Lyle's companion justified the praises bestowed on her beauty: of the style of that beauty he knew nothing.

The lady who entered was tall—masculinely so, he was inclined to think in his ill humour, with nothing stylish in appearance; whilst her manner was, to his prejudiced eyes, the cold and measured manner of one taught by experience or servility to dread the stepping one inch beyond the limits of her station. Her voice seemed her only redeeming charm; for he thought (as many men think) that the bonnet would have been of smaller dimensions, and the veil thrown back, had there been a fair face to show.

Her "Good evening, my lord," in answer to his haughty bend,—bow it could not be

called, as he did not deign to rise,—was clear and sweet, though somewhat cold—polite rather than friendly ; but such a trifle as a sweet tone could not allay his wrath, or turn aside his impertinence.

"Mr. Lyle will regret having been absent on your arrival. Important business called him to Crolford ; but he will return to-night."

"Pray make no apology ! business is a sufficient excuse for all things. Making money is the all-important concern of life ; 'the end of time and space,' as the riddle has it ; and I should have been sorry if any thought of politeness had subjected Mr. Lyle to loss. Even we idle drones, called gentlemen, must acknowledge acquiring a fortune is the most difficult and praiseworthy,—in short, the most ennobling employment of our being."

"Some think the spending one with propriety still more difficult and praiseworthy," replied the lady, discussing the matter philosophically, or morally, rather than personally.

Whether she had understood and felt his irony and meant to retort it, or had taken all in good faith and answered in the same spirit, was more than he could tell. Perhaps, as a companion, she enjoyed the satire on her superiors: he would try again.

"Opinions differ like stations—well if they differ according to them," he answered pointedly; but still the lady was stupid or unruffled.

"It would indeed be well if we all knew our stations and sought to perform their duties; since it is not the station, but our acts in those stations, for which we must render an account. In Mr. Lyle's absence, permit me to take upon me some of his hospitable duties and order refreshments: they must be acceptable after your journey."

"Thank you: I have declined them, and prefer going to bed."

"I will order your apartment to be prepared immediately," said the lady, in the calm

unvarying tone of mere politeness, as she walked towards the bell.

"You need not trouble yourself; the servant has already received my orders, and will let me know when all is prepared," he replied in a sleepy tone and with an accompanying yawn.

The lady withdrew her hand from the bell.

"You appear fatigued with your journey, my lord."

"I am, madam;" and yawning again, he sank down on the sofa, settling himself as if for sleep.

The lady appeared to hesitate a moment as to her future conduct, when a paragraph in the newspaper he had thrown on the table attracting her attention, she took it up, and seating herself in the recess of the window, began to peruse it. Annoyed at having failed to annoy, Clanellon turned to scrutinise his companion more minutely; but the coming evening and only partial admission of light

permitted him to add nothing to his former knowledge, as the veil, though partly raised towards the window to allow her to read, still hung in thick folds on the side next the sofa.

Her quiet attitude and absorbed attention seemed a triumph, and was not to be borne. Was he alone to be vexed and out of humour?

"I have not seen to-day's paper, and there must be news, to judge from your absorption. I would participate in your knowledge," he said imperiously.

"The manufactures in the North are depressed; but iron and wool are higher, and dead pigs looking up," replied the lady as quietly as before, after a moment's hesitation.

"No wonder you are interested! Such matters must be important to those whose luxuries, if not their living, depend on the contingencies of trade. Pray is there no other news equally important?"

"Yes. It is said the exports to South America are increasing daily; that the altera-

tion in the mode of collecting the customs in Columbia, contemplated by Bolivar, will be of immense advantage to the English merchant; and that Santa Anna seems inclined—"

"I will not trouble you to furnish a detail of Santa Anna's inclinations," interrupted Clanellon, whilst the thought passed through his mind—Is the girl a fool, or my equal? "I am neither merchant nor merchant's clerk, and have unluckily no sympathy with the fall or rise of cotton or wool, metals or flesh. Is there nothing that might interest one ignorant as myself?"

"There are some very good works on education and children's books advertised. There are 'The Child's own Book,' and 'The Mother's Assistant,' and 'The Complete Governess,' with a great many catechisms, 'The Book of Manners,' and some new sermons and novels. Then there is a fresh account of Warren's blacking; some new razors and pens; an original method of learning French in twenty

lessons; and some fish-sauces, cheap linen, and millinery; besides——"

"Your knowledge appears extensive, and the subjects to which you turn attention various and valuable," he observed, again interrupting her. "I am ashamed to confess I feel little interest in these things. Can you discover nothing more to my taste?"

"Tastes differ, as stations and duties, my lord. Here is a horrid murder—a dreadful accident—a mysterious occurrence—forgery, swindling, and burglary. Will you select for yourself?" holding the paper towards him.

"No. It is too great a fatigue: do you read to me, but make a better selection—you are equal to the task: I like none of these."

The lady paused a moment, and then from a little love of mischief, or in obedience to his still more imperious mandate, turned the paper and read again.

"'HOUSE OF LORDS.

"'The Earl of Malmesbury moved for returns

of all the foreign corn imported into this country since 1812; particularizing the ports from which exported, and at which imported. The noble earl also moved for returns of the quantity of Canada corn imported between the years 1815 and 1818. — Lord King presented a petition from Alversten, praying for Reform, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. — The Earl of Westmoreland presented a petition from the clergy, magistrates, and gentry of the county of Dorset, against——' "

" The proceedings of my peers are doubtless very interesting to the aristocracy; but having descended for a time from my high station, like Haroun Alraschid, I am willing to mix with the commonalty. I thought young ladies always found most interest, after births, deaths, marriages, and military promotions, in tit-bits of scandal, court gossiping, and the 'Sayings and Doings' of the fashionables."

" There are few deaths and marriages, and no military promotions," said the lady simply.

"Is there no fashionable intelligence — Table Talk or Court Circular?"

"A whole column. Shall I read that?"

"Yes," replied his lordship sharply; and the clear rich voice again rose on his ear, but with the same unvarying tone as before.

"'On Sunday his majesty attended divine service at the chapel.'"

"You may pass over church-goings and cabinet councils."

She passed her eye down the page and proceeded.

"'We understand that Lord M——n will shortly lead to the hymeneal altar the lovely and accomplished Miss A——l. A noble duke will give the bride away, and the *trousseau* is expected to be splendid.—Mrs. Darton's breakfast on Monday was allowed by all to be one of the most brilliant affairs of the season, and the crowd of fashionables was fascinated by the beauty and elegance of the youthful

hostess. — "It is whispered in the highest circles that Lady Susan C——n, who has long held in her chains a certain handsome young viscount, is on the point of bestowing her hand and fortune on the Marquis of B——.'"

Clanellon started.

"Have I disturbed you, my lord?" asked the silver voice of the reader.

"No: go on!"

The lady obeyed.

"It is confidently reported that a certain young viscount, whose manly beauty and elegant and fascinating manners have won him more than one female heart, has suddenly left town to spend some time in the country. Whether the obduracy of the goddess of fortune, at whose shrine he is a nightly worshipper, the wish to avoid a favoured rival, or the hope of renewing the splendour of his family by becoming a *partner* in a mercantile house, may have been the cause of this unexpected defec-

tion, we leave our readers to determine. Certain it is, the scene of his rustication is near a large commercial town, and a month of probation is talked of.—*Morning Post.*' "

" Impertinent!" exclaimed Clanellon, springing from the sofa and approaching the lady. " How dare they — how dare you—" and he stopped abruptly.

" If this paragraph alludes to a friend of yours, my lord, no wonder you should be hurt; for it is little to his credit to seek to renovate by a heartless and interested marriage the fortune lost by gambling. I am sorry I read it; but I only obeyed your order to go on."

" I bade you read, and not invent," he replied in increasing wrath, looking sternly at her as he spoke, for the calmness of her manner was more galling than her words.

" I do not invent, my lord," replied the lady, rising and placing the paper in his hands.

He took the paper from her hand; and there was the malicious, ill-written paragraph, glaring before him: when he turned to address the lady after its perusal, he was alone.

"Insolent!" muttered Clanellon, stamping with rage; "jeered at by a companion! and in that cool unruffled tone—with that impertinent glance of rebuke! Let her take heed: I will not be crossed with impunity! Transient as was the glance I caught, I should know her again among a thousand."

"Your room is ready, if you please, my lord," announced the servant shortly after.

"I am glad of it, for I am tired of waiting," said Clanellon, following the domestic.

Voices and laughter reached him as he ascended the stairs, and some disjointed words made him fancy himself the subject of the merriment. As he passed along the corridor into which his bed-room opened, he encountered the object of his wrath.

"Good night!" he said with a very low bow:

"believe me, I shall not forget your courtesy."

"Good night!" replied the lady. "I wish you pleasant dreams and pleasant memories."

"The house seems well ordered, truly," remarked his lordship to his valet. "Tidy and thrifty housewives," pointing to a chair whose holland cover had unluckily been overlooked.

"Ah, milor, ve vas in one grand bustle, not tinking you would retire si tôt; toute la maison is in what you call a fuss," replied the valet, showing symptoms of mirth but barely repressed.

"I thought as much," said his lordship, highly pleased at having caused annoyance, though generally holding a fuss in especial abhorrence. "I should have thought they might have got things comfortable in ten days; but there seems to be no proper servants here."

"Oui, milor, mais de young ladi had dined early, and given dem permission to go to a jeu de bal in de village; and dey say ve vas not expected to arrive till to-morrow:" and Monsieur Le Val with difficulty restrained his laughter.

"Not expected till to-morrow?"

"No, milor, and all is in confusion, for someting had been de matter in de chimneys, and les ouvriers are but just gone out of des salons."

"And the servants were amused, I suppose?"

"Oui, milor, ver much: dere vas one grand laugh at your lordship's hurry; only dey was afeard their master would be enragé dat noting was prêt. But de young ladi did not mind ven dey tell her."

Clanellon bit his lip with vexation.

"The mistake, if any, was my father's, not mine: he fixed the day of my departure," he replied indifferently, aware any expression of

vexation would furnish merriment in the servants' hall.

Some asserted that Le Val, with all his gibberish, was a real-born Englishman, who adopted a French manner, and spoke bad, broken French, because his own name was linked with unpleasant tales, and he fancied foreigners the fashion. He had but just entered Clanellon's service, and was not likely to remain in it much longer, for his master guessed the little respect in which his valet held him. He was speedily dismissed for the night, with orders not to disturb his lordship on any account.

"And is this fact?" thought Clanellon. "Have I really arrived before my time, and thus furnished merriment to pampered menials, who, in the language of their class, say I am in haste to come on trial? And the merchant and his daughter,—what a triumph for them! And Miss Desmond, with her insolent imper-

turbability! Did she feel, or did she not? Has she told her mistress and made her laugh? or dare she not complain of a lord? Time will show. I have been a fool to-night, I will be a wise man to-morrow.—That paragraph too, more galling from its truth! Well, if I must rusticate, I will make or find amusement."

CHAPTER VI.

"Were I to say the moon
Looks in her midnight glory like thy brow,
Where is the wild, sweet sparkling of thine eye?
Or that the palm is like thy stately form,
Where is thy grace among its waving boughs?"

CROLY.

"Call you me vain? Hark to my words!
Do I not say that all I have
Is poor, and mean, and of no worth,
Until the praises of my friends
Have stamped its value?
Call you this vanity?"

"May not the lips speak lowly things,
The while the heart burns with proud thoughts?"

LORD CLANELLON arose another man. A good night's rest and pleasing dreams had banished his ill humour, and the determination to mystify father and daughter, receive a certificate

of good behaviour from the former and a polite dismissal from the latter, had roused his energies, and given him an object; a more valuable gift than the thoughtless may imagine. Some curiosity to see those whose guests he had become quickened his movements, and he left his room before the usual breakfast-hour at Atherton Hall. The malicious and ill-written paragraph was forgiven, and the rebuking and provoking imperturbability of Miss Desmond was only thought of as promising future amusement, and the prospect of a playful revenge. He rather hoped she had not detailed their interview; but if she had, he should only shape his course accordingly.

Strange that a few hours of rest and oblivion should so change our mood! Without being an apologist for ill temper in any, may not the body have far more to do with the mood than many imagine? Else why, without any new pain or pleasure, or any other imaginable cause, is one happy this moment, miserable the next?

Stepping out at the open window of the small room in which he had sat the night before, Clanellon stood for some moments admiring the orderly and beautifully-arranged flower-garden before him; and then leisurely continuing his walk round the house, he stepped in at another open window and amused himself with an examination of the paintings that decorated the walls. The apartment he had entered was not large, but the paintings were fine, the furniture elegant as well as splendid, and he would have fancied, if in the house of a fashionable, that he could trace the signs of a delicate female taste in its arrangements. It was just such an apartment as would have harmonised with his beau ideal of a woman.

A half-finished sketch lay on a table, and the beauty of the subject, the boldness of the style, struck him forcibly: there was more than manner and mechanism in the sketch—there was mind. A discerning person could not look upon it without being convinced that the artist

was no dull piece of clay, but one endowed with thought and feeling,—elevated thought, strong feeling! The boldness of the relief—the depth of the shadows—the beautiful mingling of wood and sky, and rock and lake, left no doubt on the subject. It was still in his hand when a noise in the adjoining room opening into the one he occupied with folding-doors attracted his attention.

It was a large and lofty library, fitted up with almost gorgeous splendour, and only saved from being gaudy by its perfect harmony. A superb taste had desired, a judicious eye had selected. At the extremity of the smaller apartment was an immense pier-glass, reflecting the greater part of the library; and thus, himself unseen, Clanellon had a view of all that was passing near him.

Another folding-door at the further end of the library opened, and a female entering, advanced a few steps, and then turned to a window. It was not the reader of the night

before: veiled as had been the features—dim the light, he felt assured of that. It must then be Florence Lyle, the abused merchant's daughter: yet she neither answered to the description he had heard, nor his own preconceived idea. Her figure was slight, not tall, and he should certainly not have likened her to the stately palm, as Williams had done; the frame seemed too yielding and fragile: he should rather have compared her to some delicate flower. The perfection of French cookery, with no predominant taste or striking peculiarity, might pass, for she gave no promise of anything marked or decided; yet it seemed scarcely possible for even a gourmet to have thought of anything so gross and material as savoury dishes whilst contemplating her beauty. Whitby's stately pillar of stone seemed still more inappropriate. To look on her with her delicately-moulded features, rich ruby lips, blue eyes, and golden curls, all speaking softness, you might deem her incapable of deep

thought; but to believe her devoid of feeling, quick though not strong, was next to an impossibility. If any suffered, she would weep; if any pleaded, she would yield; if any ordered, she would obey.

Lord Clanellon was one of those who fancied, with Madame de Stael, that he could fathom a character in ten minutes; he thought he understood this fair girl's at a glance—energy was not her characteristic. Her movements were graceful but languid; and there was a pleading softness in her look that mastered his prejudice, and caused him to think he might feel some little compunction should she suffer wrong from his future plans.

The folding door again opened, and the merchant was reflected on the glass. The fair girl turned to greet him, but the terms of the greeting were lost to Clanellon in the noise made by the closing door.

Mr. Lyle was of middle stature and middle size; his features were good, but you doubted

the point till you examined them: no one would have been struck with him as a handsome man. The fair and florid complexion, unmarked features, and soft grey eye, rather bespoke the enjoyer of a comfortable fortune than the maker of a large one. Yet this was the man whose riches were immense, and whose speculations were reported to be at times daring to over-boldness. As his eye glanced round the room, his look showed satisfaction, perhaps gratified vanity; but it was not a personal satisfaction, not a personal vanity: if vain, he was vain of the things around him, inclined to think much of his possessions rather than of himself; a half-veiled vanity, as if his own heart almost admitting the entertaining such a feeling, yet sought by a flimsy shroud to hide it from itself. Good temper and kindness of disposition no observer would have denied him; these were marked in every lineament. Such was the character Clanellon assigned him after

a few moments' examination, and such a character was not likely to thwart his views.

"You had better make tea, whilst I seek Lord Clanellon, who is in the grounds, they tell me," said Mr Lyle: "I never expected him to be an early-riser, or should have sent to inquire sooner. His unlooked-for arrival yesterday when I was absent, and all in confusion, was most unlucky; but it shows a desire to make our acquaintance that must reconcile us to the chance. The earl's letter certainly mentions to-day."

"He has no right to feel annoyed at a *contre-tems* of his own causing," said the young lady with a smile, that made Clanellon suspect the companion had told tales.

"Was he much annoyed?" asked Mr. Lyle a little anxiously.

"So I heard—but I did not see him. It cannot matter; no one can be out of temper such a lovely morning as this, when the sun

shines so brightly and the birds sing so sweetly."

"His lordship may well have been wearied and annoyed, which was mistaken for ill humour: his father assures me his temper is excellent. I will seek him, and we shall be ready for breakfast as soon as you;" and Mr. Lyle left the room through the same door by which he had entered.

Clanellon smiled at Mr. Lyle's distress at his being accused of ill humour, and unwilling to be found in that apartment from which he had unintentionally heard what it was not intended he should hear, he crossed the room with a noiseless step and passed out on the lawn. As he laid down the drawing, he decided it was not the work of Florence Lyle: it was of too bold and decided a character to be the production of that fair young girl.

"Good morning! I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. Lyle, I presume, and should apo-

logise for yielding to the temptation of his beautiful grounds and wandering in them uninvited," said Lord Clanellon with that open warmth and frankness of manner which, when united to elegance and manly beauty, as in the present instance, is perfectly irresistible.

A Diogenes could not have withstood the fascination of the address, but would have allowed him to intercept the sunbeams without a murmur. Mr. Lyle was no Diogenes, but a man always inclined to be pleased with himself and those around him; and Clanellon felt the mastery was his at once.

"I am delighted to see you, my lord," said the merchant, venturing from the warmth of the address to extend a hand, which was most graciously pressed. "I have long looked on your father as a friend, and am proud and happy to make the acquaintance of his son. The earl and countess are well, I hope?"

"Quite well, and I am charged to say a thousand friendly things."

"How did your lordship rest? I fear not well, from this early-rising."

"You are mistaken: I enjoyed the unbroken rest of a happy child. But who could linger in bed on such a morning, in such a paradise?"

"Your lordship admires the park and garden," said the gratified owner; and then, as if ashamed of showing his gratification at the praise, though well deserved, he added; "We poor merchants, my lord, who have no time to acquire taste, or think of anything but the main chance, can only appreciate our possessions according to the suffrages of the refined. For myself, I know little of these things, but am pleased when my friends admire them," looking round with evident satisfaction.

"All must admire them," remarked Clanellon. "There can be no doubt as to their beauty, and the flower-garden is positive perfection."

"Yes, that is beautiful without a doubt.

Florence planned it," said the father, without any depreciating addition, whilst the usually unspeaking face lighted up with a beautiful expression of parental love.

"There may be more in him than I imagined," thought Clanellon—"a depth of feeling, a force of character perhaps unknown even to himself: prosperity, rather than nature, may have made him what he is."

"If report may for once be believed, beautiful as is the flower-garden, it can scarcely be deemed worthy the presence of your lovely daughter," remarked Clanellon, judging correctly that the praises of the child would neither be unwelcome, nor sound as flattery to the parent's ear.

"Florence is beautiful! my child is very lovely!" said the father with the same full open acquiescence as before, the voice touchingly earnest from the power of his love. "Shall we join her? She must be waiting breakfast for us."

"I shall feel happy in the introduction."

A few moments saw them at the library door. Mr. Lyle threw it open and they entered. The fair girl he had before seen was engaged in the mystery of tea-making; but looked up at their entrance, blushing as Clanellon advanced towards her with high-bred ease and evident admiration.

"Lord Clanellon,—Miss Desmond, a friend of my daughter's," said Mr. Lyle.

The viscount forgot to bow in his surprise. This gentle and lovely being, then, was the companion; and who was the reader of the past night? And what was Miss Lyle that she feared no rival in her companion? Was she above the littleness of jealousy, or did she consider her wealth a sufficient protection from neglect?

The door again opened behind him.

"My child—Lord Clanellon," was the second introduction of the morning. The viscount turned hastily, and before him stood Florence

Lyle, the derided merchant's daughter—his destined partner—the perfection of French cookery—the lofty palm—the stately pillar of stone—the woman who thought and spoke, but could not feel—the reader of the night before! Obscure as had been his view from the evening gloom and the poke bonnet, a secret consciousness of shrinking beneath the glance of that large calm eye told him he was not deceived; but had he required confirmation of his suspicion, it came before his rather embarrassed bow had answered her graceful yet stately acknowledgment of the introduction.

"I hope your lordship rested well, and that you have recovered from your fatigue?" said the same soft, though unvarying voice that had so struck him with its sweet and rich distinctness.

"Thank you, I am a different creature this morning," replied Clanellon significantly, shaking off his momentary embarrassment.

"I congratulate you, my lord," said Flo-

rence without an intonation that could intimate a deeper meaning than the merest common-place, passing and approaching her friend. "Thank you, dear Julia, I will release you from your labours;" and she took her seat at the head of the table.

"I have to apologise, my lord, for the confusion in which you found us last night," said Mr. Lyle, after following his daughter with a fond and admiring gaze. "I was obliged to visit Crolford on business, and fear you were very uncomfortable."

"I found everything more comfortable than I deserved;" glancing at Florence, who gave no sign of intelligence; "and it is I should apologise, since I understand from my servant I arrived sooner than was wished."

"Not sooner than was wished, though I own sooner than was expected, or you should have met with a different reception. Your father did certainly name to-day; but I am sorry you should have heard of the mistake."

"And I am sorry it should have occurred: the blame rests with my father."

"No blame anywhere, my lord, save with us for keeping such an untidy house: but the accident to the chimneys was unforeseen, and the workmen dilatory. To me, of course, a small room is no inconvenience—we merchants are accustomed to be cooped up in our counting-houses; but I fear you must have suffered inconvenience from the confined apartment."

"I am afraid inconvenience would not be the proper term," replied his lordship with winning frankness, again looking towards Florence, but without meeting her glance, though he did the half-shy, half-mischievous one of Miss Desmond.

It was impossible to guess what had been said or unsaid, thought or unthought, by that imperturbable reader; but a candid avowal of error would be the safest and handsomest way of getting out of the scrape.

"The truth is," and his embarrassment was

pleasing, "that I was out of humour yesterday, and, I fear, showed Miss Lyle a specimen of ill manners and ill temper she will not soon forget. I know not how to apologise."

"Florence will not think of it after this avowal of regret, I dare say," remarked her father, though with more gravity than he would have shown had the affront been offered to any other than his child. "You did not tell me of this, Florence. Had I known you had seen Lord Clanellon, I should have felt convinced all had been done to prove our pleasure in his visit. I understood you were out on his arrival."

"So I was, but returned soon after," replied Florence quietly, but with a softer tone than she addressed to others. "As I had given the servants leave to see the cricket-match, it was not in my power to offer his lordship that attendance he had a right to expect; but I hastened to apologise for your absence, and exerted my poor powers to amuse him."

"Then I have no doubt of the result, and shall not apologise further," said the fond father: "I remember now you were telling me of it this morning when we were interrupted."

Clanellon saw or fancied he saw a suppressed smile on the daughter's lip; but she did not look towards him.

"I neither desire nor deserve apologies, Mr. Lyle: it is I alone who should make them, and moreover render the future a counterbalance for the *contre-tems* of the past."

A slight bow marked these words as intended for Florence; but she either did not see or would not notice the inclination. "Insensible or implacable, which?" thought Clanellon.

"What a long tale you were listening to this morning, Florence!" said Miss Desmond, feeling, Clanellon imagined, some pity for his embarrassment, though slight, and certainly not awkward.

"And a sad tale, too, Julia! I sent you

away in pity: your sympathising tears would have flowed so freely, your eyes would not have recovered their lustre for a month."

"Ah, Florence, others can weep and spoil their eyes too sometimes! But I cannot bear to see your tears, they seem wrung from you after such a hard struggle to control them: mine flow spontaneously. The spring of my tears is very near the surface, as you said the other day; but whilst I weep and tremble, you soothe and act. None save the worthless come to you in vain."

"You say truly," said Mr. Lyle, looking on his daughter's friend at the instant almost as he had looked before upon his child. "I suppose I must make up my mind to a petition, Florence: you would beggar yourself, and, I half suspect, me too, rather than say 'No' to the really deserving."

"I have so much—so very much for which to show my gratitude!" replied Florence, looking with such fond and devoted affection on her

father as showed she considered him as her greatest blessing.

If the look of affection had been beautiful with the rather common-place features of the father, how much more beautiful and touching in the expressive and finely-formed features of the child ! The tears stood in the merchant's eyes.

" If you have cause to be thankful, Florence, what have not I ?" returning her look of love.

No thought of bonds or mortgages, principal or interest, crossed the mind of the merchant at that moment. His eye did not mark the splendid furnishing of the apartment, or the superb service of silver and china ; his whole soul was with his child. Clanellon was touched, and thoughts came into his mind that had never come there before. Alas, that goodly thoughts should fleet, as other lovely things !

The tears rose too in Julia's eye, and she

turned away with a sigh. She had no fond father—she had no loving mother—she had no gold to give—she had but tears and gentle words wherewith to soothe the griefs of others, and she had no one, at least she thought so at that moment, who would soothe her own. Florence guessed the feeling at a glance.

"We have indeed many things to be thankful for," she replied; "dear Julia's company among the number. Should her aunt be cruel and require her presence, I know not what we should do! You, my dear father, so pet and indulge me, I shall turn out the veriest wayward, wilful, spoiled child in existence. Never think of denying the melancholy fact — it is obvious to all. Emma says, if she did not come and scold me sometimes, I should be unbearable."

"And who loves you more than Lady Emma Dunrayne, save those whom you accuse?" asked her doting father.

"But she boasts hers is a judicious affection."

"Much the same as mine, Florence, that grieves to cross a wish or refuse a request. What do you require for this poor woman? Should I not supply the means, you will go without scarf, or cloak, or some such thing."

"I have more taste for dress than you imagine, though veiling it under the pretence of not being singular — dressing according to fortune—encouraging the industrious, and some other high-sounding phrases," said Florence, slightly embarrassed, and, Clanellon thought, annoyed at his open surprise and admiration, relapsing immediately into her former quiet, measured manner. "I must make one inquiry to prove beyond a doubt the truth of her story, and to-morrow I hope to claim your assistance."

"If you would not deem it impertinent in me to offer, Miss Lyle, I should be delighted

to join with you in an act of charity," said Clanellon with winning softness.

"Thank you! Such an offer could scarcely be impertinent; but in the present instance, your aid would be superfluous."

Clanellon could not show displeasure at her declining his offer, her words and manner were so perfectly polite; but they were only polite, and he was piqued at her coldness,—a coldness that pervaded looks, words, and tones, whenever she addressed him.

"What a superb set of china!" remarked Clanellon, taking up one of the plates.

"I am glad you like it, my lord: I am but a poor judge in these matters. We merchants are accused, and I dare say justly, of preferring the splendid to the elegant, the solid to the graceful;" and his eye glanced with satisfaction round the noble library. "Not that I had anything to do with the choice of this china: I gave an order to the manufactory at Sèvres to spare no expense, but

send me the handsomest set that could be produced; and this arrived after innumerable difficulties. No other set has been formed like it, on account of the enormous cost. I know nothing of these things; but they tell me there is something very peculiar in it;" and Mr. Lyle endeavoured to point out its peculiarities, and entered into a lengthy detail of the annoyances experienced at the custom-houses, on board the packet, and in the waggon; concluding with a discussion on the customs, excise, and revenue in general, interspersed with a depreciation of that splendour in which he was ashamed to glory openly.

Clanellon apparently listened with all due interest; but he inwardly wondered how he could ever have thought the expression of his features beautiful; whilst a stolen glance at Florence, whose duties as hostess were fully performed, made him aware of a slight contraction on her lofty brow.

"A happy conclusion!" remarked Clanel-

lon when the merchant had placed the china in safety on the shelves of the butler's pantry.

"Yes indeed!" said his honest host, unsuspicious of weariness or satire.

"And your pictures—my father raves of them."

"I am glad to hear the earl admires them. Shall I have the pleasure of showing them to you, as you decline further refreshment?"

The viscount expressed his readiness to attend him; and saying they had better begin the inspection regularly, his host led him into the small room he had before entered.

"This apartment is generally appropriated to Florence," said her father. "The furniture is entirely her own selection; though, forming one of a suite, she considered its decorations must in some degree correspond with those of the other rooms. The pictures also are mostly of her choice."

Lord Clanellon had before considered the apartment as exhibiting the perfection of female

taste, and a second inspection did not change his opinion; though he suspected that taste would have been more simple had the room stood alone, instead of forming one of a suite.

He saw afterwards some finer pictures, but either too large to suit this apartment, or subjects less calculated for a lady's boudoir. Not one here was merely chosen as the work of an old or esteemed master — all had been selected for that beauty which touches the heart as much as it attracts the eye. Their subjects were calculated to elevate the thoughts or the affections—to ennoble or to soften. The day before, he would have laughed at any incongruities, — nay, would have hunted them out to feed his satire or gratify his ill humour; to-day, he would have been vexed to discover them. He was glad there was not a Teniers or any other in the same style in her peculiar apartment; no dancing-boors—no interiors of kitchens: he could admire such works elsewhere; but there

they would have been inappropriate—a jarring string in a softly-toned lute, a false chord in a strain of entrancing harmony. But there was nothing of the sort to offend his taste, and he was pleased it was so. The ornaments were as well selected as the furniture and pictures. They were not a mob of trifling nothings; but combined use with elegance, or were so exquisitely beautiful that the most ultra utilitarian must have looked on them without a scowl.

Short, very short, as had been his acquaintance with Miss Lyle—piqued as he was by her coldness (real or assumed, he had not decided), he had learned to respect her, though agreeing with Whitby that Miss Desmond would be in the opinions of the generality the most loveable person. His plans for the future were still the same; but the character of the merchant's daughter might influence his mode of effecting them. That character he felt he did not as yet understand; it was not one to be read in

ten minutes, and his first task must be to comprehend it.

"Whose drawing is this?" inquired Clanellon, taking up the one he had examined before breakfast.

"Florence's, but not finished," said her father. "I have not much taste for young ladies' drawings in general, but there is a something in most of hers that fixes the attention."

"It has the power of awakening thought," remarked Clanellon.

"You are smiling at a father's folly, my lord."

"Rather agreeing with a father's just estimate."

We will spare our readers a catalogue of the pictures; merely stating, that they justified the Earl of Brackenbury's raving, if he had ever raved about them; and that their inspection was highly gratifying to Clanellon, whose taste and judgment were both correct.

After examining those in the boudoir, they passed through the library and vestibule into a handsome drawing-room, opening into one of larger proportions and still more splendid decorations, both hung with valuable pictures. A more intellectual cicerone than Mr. Lyle might have been procured; still he was tolerably acquainted not only with the history of the paintings, but their painters also, and could descant on their merits; and Clanellon found amusement in making his vanity as apparent in regard to his pictures as it had proved to be in other things. There was the constant avowal of pleasure that any could approve, with an assertion of ignorance, and a doubt of the worth of the object admired, save when Florence had chosen or decidedly praised—then the father's tone was assured, and he did not scruple to allow merit: her approval stamped it with worth; it was no longer a mere object of art—it was linked with the affections.

A portrait in the first saloon riveted Clan-

ellon's attention: he no longer heard what Mr. Lyle was saying—his host's history was poured on unlistening ears. In the background of this picture was a lake, bounded by rocky and wooded cliffs; in the foreground, on a heathy bank, reclined a female figure in the spring-time of youth and beauty. Her dark brown hair, drawn back from the lofty brow, "the home of thought," fell on either side in long rich curls, that rested on her neck, or played round her face and throat; whilst others floated from the full knot at the back of the head. The hat and scarf, apparently thrown aside for air, were lying at her feet. There was no study in the costume, no one extraneous ornament. The plain muslin dress was such as any might have worn on a summer evening; the reclining position, though well calculated to display to advantage her graceful and rather stately figure, was nature itself. There was nothing of study or art in the attitude; it was such as she would naturally have assumed

in throwing herself on the bank to recover from fatigue or gaze on the scene before her. Some parts of the landscape and drapery were unfinished; but the face was perfect, — at least so thought the observer. The lady had partly risen, resting on one elbow to gain a better view of the lake, whilst the glory of the setting sun seemed to shed on her delicate yet expressive features some portion of its splendour. The large hazel eyes, with their long dark lashes, that swept the rounded cheek beneath, were turned towards the west, full of the beauty of lofty thought and noble feeling; and the short upper lip with its gentle curl was slightly parted from its fellow. Once look upon that lovely face in its high and holy beauty, and you could not turn away without regret. You stood watching those parted lips, listening in breathless eagerness to catch some sudden burst of enthusiasm. The lofty brow and decided features resembled those usually assigned to Minerva, but they had not the

proud and haughty bearing of the antique—they were softer in form and expression. You felt at once that the being before you was a woman—a noble and high-minded woman! but still a woman, with all a woman's hopes, and feelings, and affections; her constancy and gentleness: no bold competitor with man—no rival in his power—no contemner of her sex's duties. She would dare in a holy cause, she would brave much for those she loved; but she would trust in a higher strength—she would dare with a holy hope.

Mr. Lyle stood by the gazer's side, but he gave no history of the picture—he told no tale of the painter; he stood beside him in silence, watching his admiration with a different feeling from that with which he had marked his homage to other paintings.

"Miss Lyle!" said Clanellon abruptly after a long and silent looking.

"My child!" said the gratified father.

Clanellon continued to gaze on the exquisite

portrait. Before the conclusion of breakfast he had quarrelled with the dim light, and the poke bonnet, and the disguising shawl, and his own ill temper that had beguiled him into so false a judgment of Florence Lyle. He had determined that her height, instead of being masculine, was perfectly feminine ; that her features were finely formed in what he considered the highest style of beauty ;—but he had also determined that those features, fine in form, won but a cold and scanty admiration, from a deficiency in expression. She had reminded him of the heroine of a tale of his childhood, who, deprived by a beneficent fairy of her heart, had acquired the name of *Indifferenza*. He had turned from her in disappointment : something he had desired to find was wanting—that very something that is beauty's greatest charm. She was as a lovely statue, as yet uninspired by the sacred fire.

It was different with the portrait. There was no disappointment ! The copy had that

which the original wanted — Soul! Not a feature on the canvass was more perfect than in the living model—perhaps scarcely as perfect, so that the painter could not be accused of flattery, and yet the superiority of the beauty of the one over the other was immense. Had he portrayed her as she should be? as he imagined she might be? or as he had seen her? Clanellon could not tell.

"Who was the artist, Mr. Lyle?" he again questioned abruptly. "No common one, it can be seen."

"Why, no! Walter is no common person, though his acts may not always be the wisest."

"Walter! The name is new to me; does he reside in this neighbourhood?"

"Not now, my lord, and that from his own fancy.—Walter Gordon, I should have said. His father, a not very wealthy clergyman,—for he thought little of fortune,—saved my life when boys together, and feeling himself dying, wrote to me to become the guardian of his only son.

I should have loved the boy for his father's sake, but I soon learned to love him for his own, and took him into my house as a clerk, where he remained some time."

"This painting the work of a merchant's clerk!" nearly burst from the amazed Clanellon; but he checked the exclamation, and Mr. Lyle proceeded.

"At first he appeared to find the situation irksome, though he performed its duties scrupulously; but when Florence left school entirely, and we had a gayer house, I thought him more than reconciled: his step was light, he had always a smiling happy look, and his heart seemed in the business;—I never had such a clerk before, and shall never have such a one again. But youth is restless and wishes change; so after a time he grew dull again, and at last fairly said he could not remain with me any longer. Poor fellow! I shall never forget his ghastly look as he told me; and he found such difficulty in uttering the

words, you would have thought he was pronouncing his own sentence of death. I tried to dissuade him, but he could not bear it, and rushed out of the house — even quitted the place for some days, leaving a letter promising to return shortly, but earnestly requesting me not to urge him to remain, for he could not stand it. He came back as he promised, but so changed! I could have played woman, and wept; and Florence was so shocked as to be near fainting, though he did not know it. I rather wished her to speak to him and persuade him not to go, for I was loth to part with him for his own and his father's sake; but, I cannot tell why, she did not like to press his stay—and yet he had not long before saved her from great danger by stopping the horses that had run away with her carriage, rescuing her by his strength and presence of mind. At one time I thought he was a great favourite of hers; but I suppose Florence does change a little sometimes, like the rest of her sex; for

after the accident they were not so much together, and sometimes I thought she wished him gone, though much distressed when I first named his intention. Yet she always speaks very highly of him. His leaving me was the more annoying, as I had intended taking him into the house and giving him a share in the concern."

"Had you told him of your intended kindness?" inquired Clanellon, checking a smile.

"I had hinted as much, speaking of the then expected marriage of Florence: for though doting on my child—living, I may say, on her love,—I know it would be selfish not to yield her to one worthy of her. Both projects were defeated — Florence Lyle did not like her suitor, and Walter Gordon did not like the counting-house."

"And his sudden departure prevented the completion of the picture?" asked the viscount with more interest than he could well account for.

"Not exactly: it had been abandoned a short time before—why I could never learn. I suppose both got weary, for both made excuses when I spoke on the subject; yet he had not had above four sittings. This picture is almost the only point on which Florence and I have different wishes,—or, at least, in which each would not find pleasure in yielding to the other. She says it is such a superlative piece of flattery that she cannot bear it should be exposed to public observation, and wishes to hang it in her dressing-room; whilst I feel it does my child no more than justice. Beautiful as it is, I have seen her look still more beautiful, though perhaps in general her cheek may not have as rich a glow, nor her eye be quite as bright. Indeed I think she has been more pale than usual lately; and though she smiles as sweetly and as often upon me, I have sometimes doubted if she smiles as often upon others. The cares of life coming on her, I suppose," added the doting father in a tone

that showed he had found them no great weight for many a year at least; and if there had been troubles in his earlier days, their memory had been effaced.

"The whole spirit of the artist must have been imbued with the beauty of the subject. The heart, more than the hand, guided the pencil," remarked Clanellon, scarcely aware he was thinking aloud, and surprised at receiving an answer.

"Yes; Walter admired my child, as in truth all must; though I never knew him pay her a compliment, except when they jested together: and it was delightful in their gay young days to listen to their merry play of words, and watch their sunny looks; but they grew grave after a while, and their light laughs became less frequent, and their harmless mirth was stilled. Florence said she was a woman—a child no longer; and Walter was a man, I suppose. They say those who most excel are least contented with their works,

and perhaps it is so; for the evening before his departure I caught him looking at this picture, certainly without any pleasure, and heard him mutter something about presumption.

"'No presumption at all, Walter,' I said; 'you have succeeded to my wishes.' I shall never forget his delighted look, though it was gone in a moment; and he persisted in charging himself with presumption, asserting it as if he had committed a crime, though I assured him I liked his portrait much better than one by a famous artist."

"Where is Mr. Gordon now?"

"With his friend Sir Charles Cleveland, I believe. His little fortune is left in my hands, and he writes at the proper times to receive the interest. It was provoking to be left by one I really loved; and he does not seem inclined to pay us a visit even, though I insisted that Florence should write in her kindest way to invite him. His answer was very grateful, civil, and all that sort of thing, but rather com-

mon-place—deficient in the usual energy of his correspondence; and I do not think Florence's letter was as good as hers generally are."

"Is this far-famed merchant, this clever man of business, noted for his judgment and penetration, without a suspicion of the truth? Does he not see that the clerk had anticipated the project of becoming one of his house, and that the lady had checked his presumption, though too delicately generous to reveal it?"

So thought Clanellon as he looked at his host to discern some trace of suspicion. He looked in vain; all there was calm, honest ignorance. Clanellon smiled—he felt he had nothing to fear from the father's penetration.

"Mr. Gordon appears to have acted with ingratitude towards you, considering your kindness," said the viscount, partly to chime in with what he discovered was the secret feeling of his host, and partly from a sudden and instinctive dislike to Gordon, for which no reason could be assigned.

"I did think him ungrateful at the time, I own, I was so much vexed; and some said he had a high opinion of his own abilities, and thought he was fit to be the head instead of the tail of the house. Mr. Sawyer, my partner, never liked him; but Florence will not allow him to be ungrateful, and always defends him, let who will blame him. Youth will be restless: as he grows older, he will grow wiser, and perhaps return. I have still a great regard for him."

"Has he entered any other house?"

"No: he could scarcely do that in delicacy, though I offered him introductions. For some time at least he will not be a man of business. I had a long talk with him about his future prospects, and offered to assist him in any way; but he provoked me by his indifference about making a fortune, saying riches were little to him, and he had quite enough for his moderate desires. If there had been a war he approved of, instead of peace, I think he would have

gone into the army; and he once thought of the law, with the idea, I fancy, of winning a title, to judge by some lines I found—yet I can scarcely consider him ambitious. I dissuaded him from this, pointing out the difficulty of getting on in it without interest, which he has not, though certainly some talent: and who cares for a mushroom title? Perhaps I was wrong; but we plain merchants do not set much store on such gewgaws, though we respect the old nobility. I was in hopes then to keep him a merchant. Poor fellow! I am afraid he has got into bad hands, and will come to be a beggar."

"Indeed! Low company, I suppose — the ambition to be first."

"Not that exactly. I do not know that his companions are vicious, or absolutely low, though mostly poor; and I never heard of his gaming or drinking."

Clanellon half smiled, half frowned; but his host saw it not, and continued.

"Yet I am sadly afraid he will lead a sort of vagabond life, and be ruined. I once found some lines to Milton between the leaves of the ledger, and spoke to him reasonably on the subject,—after which I hoped he had given up such follies; but I understand now he lives a great deal with authors, and some think one of these days he will turn author himself. It will be a great pity, for he is equal to better things. Now I make a point of asking authors, and learned men, and artists, and those sort of people, to dinner, as I think the rich should patronise genius; but I should be very sorry for any one I valued to take a turn that way. Authorship will never make money; it is a poor trade indeed! And as for fame, if they get it, it is an unsubstantial repast; better stick to business and live on turtle and venison. What is the use of poetry, and the belles lettres, as they call them? They only put nonsensical notions into young people's heads—but for these Walter might have been with me

now. Not but what I have a great respect for genius, and think the rich should patronise it: besides, Florence has some taste in these things; and what Florence likes, I like."

"Do you mean that Miss Lyle writes?" asked Clanellon with pretended simplicity.

"Heaven forbid! Florence knows her station too well; she will never be wanting in proper dignity."

Viscount Clanellon was neither an author, nor a great admirer of authors; yet he smiled at the contempt of the man of money for the man of genius,—the rating gentility and station so far above talent; the highest gift of Heaven! the noblest endowment of man! — despising genius as genius, not grieving for its occasional abuse. No one perceived the weaknesses and follies of others with a keener eye; no one made less legitimate use of such observation in marking and amending his own. Would we but criticise ourselves as we criticise others, and seek our own amendment as earnestly as

we call for theirs, the plan of universal harmony would be well nigh accomplished.

"Let us pass on, my lord: if I detain you here longer, you will laugh at a father's folly. How do you like this?" pointing to the next picture,—a head of Rembrandt's, with his rich, dark colouring.

"It is inimitable!" replied Clanellon.

"I was sure you would admire it. Walter purchased it in some out-of-the-way place, and gave it me on my birthday. His taste and judgment are excellent."

Clanellon did not fail to remark, that however the merchant might consider Gordon as offending against dignity and prudence—almost against virtue—by becoming the associate of authors, he entertained a respect for his opinions only second to that he entertained for Florence's. He did not appear to think that his judgment, save in the matter of not making money, could admit of doubt. The viscount was rather at fault as to the cause of this; but

as it could not concern him, he passed on to the next picture, and amused himself by drawing out Mr. Lyle into a further display of weakness.

"What a superb painting, Mr. Lyle!"

"Does your lordship really admire it? I am delighted that it meets your approbation. I understand little of these things myself. We merchants have not much time to study any arts but those of money-making; and the picture-dealers consider us their peculiar prey, judging, I fear truly, that we have most of us more money than taste,—in fact, are but simpletons as soon as we quit the counting-house. We should keep to our proper stations, and not seek to vie with the nobility in taste and fashion."

"Do not talk to me, Mr. Lyle, of the taste and fashion of the nobility. Where could we find such a display as this? Why, you absolutely live in a paradise of splendour! I shall turn merchant myself; I feel quite a cipher in your gorgeous apartments."

"Ay, there it is, my lord! We are accused of being too gorgeous—a proof of bad taste and low birth," said the gratified merchant, unveiling his weakness for the amusement of his guest, as his guest desired.

"You do yourself wrong; and I was incorrect in calling your apartments gorgeous, if by that you understand the glare of bad taste, the tinsel tawdriness of grovelling minds. I meant to praise the harmonious splendour of all at Atherton Hall. Before my visit, to my shame I admit, I held the prejudice that we of ancient birth and title were the sole heritors of taste; but I acknowledge my error, and claim your pardon by this frank confession. Need I say that I abjure my heresy now and for ever?"

"It is quite delightful to meet with such a liberal mind; but there is nothing to pardon, my lord. I have a great respect for birth myself—indeed some say that my family can be traced up to one of the Norman line of kings; but I care little for such idle tales myself.

No, no—I am contented to let my father begin my family, and consider him the founder of our race, as he was of our fortune. Not that my father despised education, as he showed by sending me to Oxford, where I first met the earl: though, to be sure, I think my mother had the greatest hand in that. Some scoffed, and said a gentleman commoner would never make a man of business, and I should come to ruin; but I have not appeared in the Gazette yet, and do now and then visit the shop. My father was never ashamed of his origin, and why should I be? I have often heard him tell his guests—and some of them titled too—that when he came to Fairport his jacket was out at elbows, his shoes out at toes, and one halfpenny all the money in his pocket,—and that he had not a friend to help him on, for he was an orphan, and none cared if he lived or died. At first he was an errand-boy, but gradually got on till he died worth more than would ransom kings or revolutionise king-

doms. I have often heard him say, he has been so driven as to be only able to buy a quarter of a pound of bacon, to serve for every meal, and even obliged to put by half of that for the next day, not knowing where to get more. No, my lord, my father was the founder of our family, and I am proud of him, because, beginning with nothing, he died the first merchant in the place. Some would taunt me with his low origin; but by openly avowing it, I rob malice of its triumph. I am no despiser of honours for others; but I am contented with being a simple, unpretending merchant. I have little taste myself for these splendid things; but I am pleased when my friends like them, and hold we should maintain the station we have gained."

Clanellon turned aside to conceal a smile at the merchant's fancied contempt for the gauds of earth; and as he did so, he met the rebuking glance of his daughter, who had joined them unperceived.

"Yes, dearest father," she said, laying her hand on his shoulder, and looking fondly on him, whilst her features lighted up with a beauty, if not quite as brilliant, more soft and touching than that depicted in her portrait,—"yes, we have indeed cause to love your father's memory, to be proud of the founder of our race. Not because he came upon the earth a beggar and left it a rich man;—not because he came to Fairport as an errand-boy, and left his son the first merchant in the town:—no; not that he acquired fortune, for the servile and the vicious may be permitted to do that; they may revel in splendour till death shows the nothingness of worldly grandeur; they may succeed, and all be as the vain heart desires, not as a blessing, but as a warning voice, proclaiming that the reward of virtue is not on earth; but we may glory in our father, because, if he sought for wealth, he sought it by means on which he did not fear to ask a blessing. His word was ever binding, though its keeping caused him

loss — the pittance set aside was often shared with the more needy still — he never scoffed at modest worth; never played off the weakness of another for his merriment; and, in the midst of wealth, never forgot its Giver. Well may we be proud of him—well glory in him as our race's founder! May his descendants be but worthy him, and him he left! What is mere rank, compared to such a character?"

The merchant forgot his wealth and his boasting — forgot the presence of a stranger: his arm was passed round his child, and his lips pressed her brow.

However little Lord Clanellon might have seen or known of the love between a parent and a child, there was a holy beauty in the affection between Florence and her father that stirred his better feelings: he could not scoff, even in thought, but turned away with a smothered sigh.

CHAPTER VII.

"She a woman!
She is an iceberg in a frozen sea!
She is no woman, or my words had won her."

"THE carriage is ready, if you please, sir," said a servant entering at the moment.

"The carriage ready!" repeated Mr. Lyle in surprise. "I had no idea it was so late. What is to be done, my lord? Not expecting the pleasure of seeing you till late to-day, I appointed an interview on important business that cannot well be delayed. Will your lordship accompany me to Fairport, whose lions I am sure Mr. Sawyer will feel great pleasure in pointing out; or will you explore the beauties of Atherton, with Florence for your guide? There are horses, should you prefer riding."

"I cannot doubt, if Miss Lyle will consent to become my guide," replied Clanellon with graceful gallantry. "May I hope she will undertake the irksome task?"

"I shall be happy to show every attention to one of my father's guests," replied Florence with her usual quiet manner.

"Will you finish a survey of the pictures, or see the grounds?" asked Mr. Lyle.

"The grounds, if you please: that is, if Miss Lyle should not object to the heat. One feels ashamed at not enjoying this bright sun; and your collection of paintings is so superb, I am as it were inebriated with their beauty, and require some time to recover my sobriety."

"As you please, my lord," said his flattered host. "I leave you under my daughter's care: she must entertain you till dinner."

"Florence," said her father as he met her in the ante-chamber on returning from his own room with a paper, "you will not take Lord Clanellon to see your school."

"I take Lord Clanellon to see my school!" exclaimed Florence with a playful look of wonder. "Why, my dear papa, how long have you counted me among the demented?"

The father smiled at her gaiety, though scarcely comprehending the meaning of her surprise. The playful look was gone in an instant. Miss Lyle was again the polite but stately hostess; she had caught the eyes of Clanellon, who had followed her and must have heard her words, fixed earnestly upon her.

The merchant proceeded to Fairport, and his daughter and her friend did the honours of the hospitable luncheon, and the beautiful grounds of Atherton.

"What do you think of Lord Clanellon now?" asked Julia Desmond of her companion, entering Florence's apartment for a few moments' idle talk before she proceeded to her own to dress for dinner.

"Not very differently from what I thought last night," replied her friend.

"Not very differently from what you thought last night, Florence? Why, you described him then as imperious, selfish, and ill-tempered: you cannot think him so to-day?"

"Why not?"

"Why not? What a question, Florence! Why, he is all smiles and politeness; so animated — so delightful — he riveted your attention and sympathy, though you seemed little inclined to accord him either. It was a summer's day in nature and in mood."

"Yes, Julia; but clouds rose occasionally on the horizon, threatening to obscure the azure, which you laud so much."

"I saw no cloud, Florence. You must not be so critical." Julia rarely saw more than others wished — not always that. "You allowed him handsome even last night."

"Superlatively so! since you will be content with no common and sober praise. Considering beauty merely as the perfection of feature, in no connexion with mind and heart, Lord

Clanellon may boldly challenge criticism: he would find few superiors."

"In no connexion with mind or heart, Florence? Do you think he has neither then?"

"Both, such as they are; neither, such as they should be."

"Oh, Florence! you are too severe. I should fear, if I did not love you. He was tired last night, and then one is always cross—I am so myself,—and he thought he was slighted, and owns he did not know it was you. Clever as he is, how can he be without mind? Then he speaks so gently, and takes such interest in all who suffer, how can he be without heart? He is the most fascinating person I have seen at Atherton. Indeed, indeed, dear Florence, you are too severe!"

"Perhaps I am: I met him in prejudice—I judge him in prejudice."

"I know you could not be long unjust, dear Florence—nay, you never are so; but you owned to a headach this morning, and that woman's

sad tale caused gloomy thoughts. He has won the suffrages of all: even the blunt old gardener praised him, and said you would make the handsomest couple in all England."

Florence started; whether in surprise or displeasure Julia did not know, and remarked with some show of vexation "I wish he had not come."

"Wish he had not come, Florence? and I am so glad!"

"Take care, Julia! I know you to be susceptible, and you seem in danger," said her friend, turning from the window with sudden gaiety and caressing her cheek. "Hearts are troublesome things to control sometimes, and Viscount Clanellon will scarcely assist young ladies in their proper management. He may trifle—but he cannot in safety be trifled with."

"I am in no danger; but you are judging severely again. What ill can you see in one day?—not an entire day either."

"How much longer have you known him, my unsuspicious Julia?"

Julia blushed.—"No longer; but then there are some people one feels by intuition are good and amiable."

Florence looked admiringly on her gentle and lovely companion, who, guileless herself, confided in all, and shook her head.

"Feelings are very touching and very beautiful things, Julia; but then, like many other beautiful things, they are surrounded with dangers. Feeling may give to life its brightest beauty; but it can also add a severer pang to sorrow. It may enchant and beautify, but it must not be our sole guide and ruler. This stranger is not all you think him,—he is not worthy of my Julia's regard. You need not blush and deprecate;—I only mean such regard as you feel for those deserving of it. But it is time to dress now, love;" and pressing her lips on her friend's glowing cheek, Florence gaily bade her depart.

"From twelve till five have I done my best to amuse and fathom this merchant's daughter," was Clanellon's thought as the ladies left him; "and with what success? The stately Florence might like to be compared to one of the rare and beautiful exotics in her father's hothouse: I would the rather liken her to one of the artichokes in his kitchen-garden — leaf after leaf, fold after fold to be withdrawn ere you arrive at the heart; its outward clothing harsh and repelling. Is there a heart to reach? and if so, is it worth the trouble of the search? I suspect there is; and for the trouble, I must have some employment to amuse me during my sojourn, and will dare the dangers of its choking envelope. The merchant will soon weary me, and the companion is read and ruled at will. Is this cold and measured mien real or assumed? Is she blind to my powers; or would she control them? I am not one to waste my efforts. I forced her to show interest and pleasure more

than once—she shall do more, since I must abide here. I think I marked a cloud at my attentions to her friend, though she chose to look coldly on attentions to herself. Ay, pique a woman—rouse her jealousy, and her mortified vanity is a lever capable of removing a Mount St. Bernard of coldness."

The exquisitely cooked and arranged, rather than profuse dinner, had been concluded—the splendid services of plate and china removed by the well-tutored footmen—the excellent wines and elegant dessert duly discussed—the ladies bemoaned out of the dining-room — the merchant's remarks answered, if not listened to, with all proper politeness—coffee had been announced—and Clanellon proceeded to the drawing-room. Florence was alone, seated on an ottoman, with a book in her hand; the rich glow of the setting sun streaming in through the open window on her marble brow and scarcely tinted cheek, and lending a brighter hue to her dark glossy curls. She took no notice of his

entrance, and he stood watching her for some time in silence. The proffer of coffee from the servant caused both to turn: Clanellon offered to help the lady, who declined the courtesy with answering politeness; and then helping himself, he took a seat beside her.

"May I ask the subject of your studies, Miss Lyle?—it appeared absorbing."

"Lacon," she replied, without putting down the work, though she did not absolutely continue reading.

"And you were pleased with it?"

"Very much!"

"I should have thought dry apophthegms would have scarcely suited the taste of a young and lovely enthusiast. I must say I judge from report, not having read the work."

"Who said I was an enthusiast?" asked Florence in her usual unvarying, almost monotonous tone, the very antipodes of enthusiasm.

"I learnt it there," he replied, pointing to her portrait.

Her eyes rested on the beautiful semblance for some moments, and Clanellon fancied the tint deepened on her cheek, but so very slightly it might have been only fancy. Her look was as calm, her tone as measured as before.

"Perhaps that may tell something of such a folly; but did you ever see me look like that?"

"I have at least thought I might hereafter see you thus."

"So it is ever with men of the world: they will not see things as they are; they will imagine something beneath the surface."

"Are we in the wrong? Are all things as they seem?"

"Our men of business say not; but we simple maidens see and believe."

"Does Miss Lyle mean to say she judges only from the surface?—that she neither sees, nor suspects what may lie beneath?"

"Perhaps Miss Lyle, like other misses, scarcely knows what she means."

"She cannot mean to libel herself and her sex thus?"

"She certainly meant nothing rude to either."

He was silent some moments from vexation: he found now, as he had found in the morning, he could neither induce her to act a flirtation nor talk sentimentalism; and yet there was so much mind even in her common-place—it was so original, that he could not think it natural.

"Then you condemn enthusiasm as a folly, Miss Lyle?"

"Do not you?" she asked without a change of tone, looking into his face so calmly, and yet so searchingly, that he half turned away.

"Why, we men of the world, as you term us, do lose something of the beautiful gloss of youth sooner perhaps than may be desirable; but I asked your opinion without venturing my own."

"There is some trouble in forming a correct opinion on any subject; but if enthusiasm is, as you say, only the beautiful gloss of youth so quickly lost in a contact with the world, better to sponge the cloth of life at once, and fit it, by this equal deprivation of gloss, for the necessary wear and tear of existence."

"What unsentimental advice! What an unpoetical comparison! Who could have expected such from a young lady under age?"

"You will but waste your time in talking sentiment to me. Having neither brother nor sister to play with, I soon forgot to be a child."

"Then you think sentiment childish?"

"I shall find no lack of supporters in such an opinion."

Waste of time indeed was his thought. To amuse, to interest, may fail; but I can pique.

"You must have found it lonely without brother or sister."

"I had my father," she said with a touching fulness of tone.

"Yes, and a fond and noble one moreover; but he is generally absent during the day."

"I had the almost certainty of his return in the evening."

"And you could live on that?"

"What more could I require?"

"But you had doubtless young friends with you frequently?"

"Yes; my father wished it to be so."

"You appear much attached to your present companion; nor can I wonder at it. What a gentle, lovely being Miss Desmond is! So delicately beautiful! So soft, and yet so animated: joining alike in the lively sally or the burst of feeling. Nothing to chill, yet nothing of display; winning regard and admiration at a glance. Just what gentle woman should be—the beau ideal of our youthful fancy."

Again Clanellon met the quiet searching of that large dark eye, and he almost thought he could trace a smile upon the lip; but the voice varied not.

"Yes, Julia is lovely, very lovely;—I should say with you, the most delicately beautiful being I ever beheld; with a mind as lovely as her person. None can know her without loving her; none could seek to profit by her guilelessness; none but the utterly worthless would even for a solid good, much less for a trifling gratification, risk the causing her one pang."

Clanellon deemed it prudent to change the conversation, and the setting down his cup naturally broke off the former one.

"I see harp and piano, Miss Lyle: you play, and will, I trust, afford me the pleasure of listening. May I not hope?"

"Oh yes, I play: every one plays now-a-days; a non-musician is 'a marvel and a show,'—a less than nothing! But I am no great proficient: Julia's playing far surpasses mine.

"But you sing?"

"A little, as all young ladies say; but I have a poor voice and want energy. If fond of music, Julia will more than content you, though resolved to be critical."

"And you will ensure your companion's compliance with my request?"

"I have no doubt my friend," laying a stress on the word, "will exert her powers to please you. I do not like the word companion; it has a double meaning. I am much attached to Julia; I delight in her praise, and should resent her wrongs, could any wrong her."

"'Burn with one love, with one resentment glow,'"

repeated Clanellon in a tone bordering on irony. "I thought you were not sentimental, Miss Lyle?"

"It is scarcely a folly when Julia is in question: she is the incarnation of sentiment."

"How can you linger within on such an evening?" exclaimed Julia, advancing to the window, without perceiving Clanellon, shaking back the light curls from her glowing cheek as she spoke. "The birds are reproaching you in their songs, and the flowers are drooping in your absence."

Florence looked at her a moment in silent

admiration, and then turned to Clanellon to claim his meed of praise. But he was watching the change wrought in the expression of her own features by this admiration of her friend; and Florence, annoyed at his observation, rose.

"Your words are poetry to-night, Julia, and irresistible even to me whom you have so often scolded for her coldness;" and drawing her friend's arm within her own, she stepped out upon the lawn.

"I assure you three is the most delightful number for conversation," said Clanellon, following: "I must come, though not included in the fairy-like invitation."

"You there, my lord! I thought Florence had been alone," said the startled and blushing Julia.

"Yes, Miss Desmond, I am here; and you will not, I am sure, banish me your presence, Miss Lyle and I having decided you to be the most interesting and tender-hearted of beings."

Julia blushed still deeper, but made no re-

ply; and Clanellon again exerted all his powers of fascination, inspired by the beauty of his fair companions, and the evident admiration of one, unchecked by the coldness of the other, whose interest and animation, in spite of herself, as he thought, he succeeded in awakening more than once.

Shawls were sent for, Mr. Lyle joined them, and the party did not re-enter the house till long after dusk.

The events of the evening proved that Florence had stated the truth with regard to the musical powers of herself and friend. Julia was a superior player, and her voice was very sweet, with far more power than Clanellon had expected. Her favourite songs were sentimental, rather than energetic; and such harmonised best with her delicate beauty. Clanellon rendered the blushing girl the praise she so well deserved, and owned her friend had not said too much of her powers. Florence played and sang at his request; but, as she

had said, her performance was a disappointment after Julia's: it was particularly deficient in feeling and force; and her voice, so much sweeter than Julia's in conversation, was inferior to it in singing.

"You will believe me in future, Lord Clanellon," she said as she rose from the harp; "and in pity I absolve you from the task of praising what you cannot admire."

"I admit I doubted you before," he replied rather bluntly.

She looked up at him quickly, apparently better pleased with this frank avowal than with any of his former attentions; but the scrutiny did not content her, and she turned the conversation.

A month passed, and still Clanellon was the guest of the merchant—a petted and honoured favourite with his host; but with his host's daughter he was compelled to admit, however humiliating the admission, that he had made little visible advance towards favouritism. The

heart of the artichoke, as he had termed her in his pique, was but little more disclosed to his view: a leaf had been withdrawn occasionally, and some of the outer coverings had been unfolded; but before he could triumph in his success, the folds were replaced, and the heart as impenetrable as ever.

"As well seek to make an impression on an alligator," he muttered in his wrath, throwing down a dull work on natural history which Florence, it might be in malice, had recommended for his perusal, when he had annoyed her by choosing to converse, asking her opinion on literary subjects. "I am not to be mocked with impunity! Could I be quite sure her coldness was assumed to pique me, she should soon learn whose was the master-mind."

Whatever he might suspect, he knew nothing with certainty; his knowledge had "progressed" but slowly, since the first day. If he succeeded in interesting her for a time, the instant he led the conversation to any subject

connected with thought or feeling, that could promise an exposé of her own character, or warrant his indulging in tender or sentimental allusions, that instant she drew back as it were within herself; and it required a long course of conversation on her favourite topics, addressed to others, without an appeal to her, to win back his former vantage-ground. A flirtation in appearance, much less in reality, was as hopeless as the North-western Passage. He compared himself to Sisyphus, the stone ever rolling back upon him; and, it may be, considered his own fate the hardest.

Once, in sport, Julia insisted on his assigning to each the character of some bird, beast, fish, or reptile, which each was to sustain; and, piqued at a recent failure, he assigned the hedgehog to Florence Lyle. Julia was shocked, and scolded him for the selection, insisting, with friendly warmth, that Florence should not enact such a prickly, repulsive creature.

"A hedgehog!" repeated Florence in those sweet tones that were music in themselves, glancing up at Clanellon from her drawing with a bewitching archness, and shaking back the long dark ringlets from her lofty brow. "I thank you, my lord. The very character for me, though Julia raves at it. Beware how you seek to annoy me;—my prickles are ever sharp, and I can be a compact untouchable ball in an instant."

Clanellon's abrupt advance and open admiration at the illumination of her features by this sudden and unusual burst of gaiety recalled her to recollection, and the next instant she was as cold as ever.

"Hedgehog, in truth!" muttered the viscount, turning on his heel; "and a woful fate the poor wretches have," he added. "The sport of all,—mocked, bruised, tortured!"

"Poor hedgehog!" said Florence in the usual measured tone, so provoking to her father's guest.

"I am shocked, my lord," said Julia. "How can you predict such a fate to dear Florence, and give her such a character?"

"Miss Lyle chooses her own character, and must abide her fate!" he muttered with a look, that made the simple Julia wonder.

The accidental absence of many of the neighbouring families had rather circumscribed their society; but Clanellon's observation had shown him that a calmness, almost amounting to coldness, was the general characteristic of Florence's manner, if not of her disposition. To young men it appeared more marked. Whilst all admired and respected, and many would have wooed, few loved, and all complained of her reserve. With elderly and married men she was in higher favour; the children were all won by her sweet voice and loving smile; and the ladies, young and old, praised the propriety of her demeanour, her faultless performance of hostess, and her excellent management of her father's immense establishment,

which was entirely under her control, save as to its extent. She found without annoying Mr. Lyle she could not get rid of any of the idle men; but she did dispense with their attendance at the door, insisting that no more than two should assist her in or out of the carriage.

The remarks on her reserve were by no means displeasing to Clanellón; still he was hurt at not proving the exception to the general rule: it was unique, it was mortifying, to have his attentions — his devoted attentions — so ill rewarded. Mr. Lyle, if called on, would vouch for his endeavouring to win his daughter; the daughter, if he made an offer, it seemed probable would refuse him: thus the plan he had proposed to himself some weeks before had been worked out to perfection—his purposed end was accomplished. He had only to receive his dismission and obtain the promised subsidy from his father, without the encumbrance of the merchant's daughter. What more could he require?—what more

could his father require? If the lady would not have him, she would not! Dark rooms and bread and water were out of fashion for compelling daughters to compliance; or, if they had not been, Mr. Lyle would never dream of forcing the inclination of his darling child. That Clanellon was not quite so well satisfied with the success of his plan as a reasonable man should have been, was certain: why this change in his views, is another question. Let those who have never changed their own minds rail! Let those who can always give good reasons for a change explain! I attempt to do neither. This world is a world of change, and the consistency of which many boast is but the consistency of inconsistency—a mill-round course in wrong, an endless ring of errors.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Heart! What's that? Oh, a thing servant-maids have, and break for John the footman."—GODOLPHIN.

"I heed him not—but he is critical:
I love him not, and therefore would not
Furnish him the pleasure of fault-finding."

VISCOUNT CLANELLON was reclining on a sofa in the library at Atherton, moralising on the changes of the world, or those of man, or, it may be, indulging in a stricture on female manners, when the falling of the book on natural history from the table on which he had pettishly thrown it made him look up, and he encountered the gaze of Julia Desmond withdrawn on the instant with a blush.

The small satin-stitch leaf which engaged her needle was not completed before Clanellon had crossed the room and taken his seat beside her.

She did not look up, but she was convinced his eye was on her. Had she seen and read the meaning of his smile as the uncourteous needle entered her finger instead of the muslin, she might have blushed more deeply, though scarcely with such pleasurable emotion: but we have said Julia never saw too much; had she seen more, she would have been wiser—we do not say happier.

"Always at work, Miss Desmond. How I envy you the power of constant quiet employment! We men are obliged to overcome the shocks of life by active and absorbing pursuits, often working out a greater pain than that they should have medicined; but you ladies find consolation for every trouble in your needle. If you lose a lap-dog or a lover, no matter which, you net a purse or work a collar, a portion of your grief evaporating with every stitch. If,

the privileges of the nobility being abolished, I should ever be condemned to the vulgar punishment of hanging, I shall call on you to work the cap to conceal my agony."

"My lord!" exclaimed the gentle girl in pity, in terror, and in wonder.

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Desmond! I am in no peril at present, not having been able to conquer my disgust at the hawking about of my last dying speech and confession, for the amusement of the intellectual vulgar, and all for the price of one penny."

"You are ill, my lord," said Julia timidly, alarmed at his bitter tone and the fire in his quick eye.

"No, sweet Julia," he replied with a sudden change to gentle accents. "Not in ill health—only in ill humour."

Julia's incredulous smile was a deeper rebuke than would have been a sharp reproof.

"When we are restless or writhing under the cruel crossings of this stirring life, it is a

trial of patience to see you sewing as if nothing could disturb the measured monotony of your stitches. If we speak of the conflicts of the mind — the jarring interests of mankind—the shocks of life — you finish threading your needle or counting your stitches, and then, the pointed piece of steel being in its proper place, you look up with a chilling and rebuking calmness—I must not call it insensibility—and say, 'Yes indeed! this world is full of trouble!' with less concern than if you had said your cotton was too coarse; and then you put your needle in and pull it out again as though your sympathy had been abundant. I hate to see ladies always working; it seems to me to say: 'I will hold no communion with man:' but, more especially, do I detest cross-stitch in all its varieties, and that ragged-looking manufacture you accomplish with a shuttle. You and Miss Lyle appear particularly partial to both."

"Oh no! I am not fond of either," said Ju-

lia, in haste to defend herself from the charge of liking what he did not admire. "Nor dear Florence either: I have heard her say she disliked both, as checking thought and conversation, and that she never tried them but when her companions were stupid or disagreeable, and she wished for a civil excuse to be as stupid and disagreeable as themselves."

"She has worked much at both lately," remarked Clanellon with a calmness Julia never guessed was assumed—she did not look at him.

"So she has, now I remember. I suppose she wished to finish up her worsteds."

Clanellon bit his lip. He could willingly have consigned worsted, canvass, and needles—perhaps at the moment Julia and the fair Florence herself—to the lake on the top of Mount Souffrance in St. Vincent's, or any other loathsome or unfathomable depth.

"What would you have us do all day?" asked Julia timidly after what she considered an awful pause.

Clanellon roused himself from his reverie.

"What would I have you do? Bestow all your powers of fascination upon us, instead of wasting them on pins and needles. I am positively jealous of those pointed things;" and with a gentle force he possessed himself of her work. "It is pretty too," he added. "If the ruffles and collars of Vandyke should come in again—and who shall limit the vagaries of fashion?—you should have my royal permission for such work. No collars should be worn but those worked by ladies' hands. Would you be my sempstress, sweet Julia?"

Julia blushed still deeper than before, and the voice faltered as she attempted playfulness.

"You are unconscionable, my lord! Would you have us your slaves and work-women?"

"Not our slaves—we would be yours. We would but have you ever hold us in your thoughts; now you think of us only as the makers of your implements for work."

"Not so!" said Julia softly.

Again it was well for her present pleasure that she did not see his smile. There are some minds so indolent, that they prize nothing which they cannot obtain with facility—desire nothing with sufficient intensity to labour for its acquisition; their conduct being ruled by the line,

"Take the good the gods provide thee."

There are other minds so craving, so energetic, so ultra active, that they only value acquisitions in proportion to their difficulty of attainment. Give them what they ask at their first bidding, and, obtained, they fling it from them in disgust, though a priceless jewel; refuse their bidding, and they will pine, and fret, and toil, till life itself become a burden in pursuit of what may prove a worthless bauble. We suspect Clanellon was nearer allied to the second class than the first; most clever and strong-minded persons are, though they often lack the judgment to know where a healthy

and laudable perseverance ends, and a sickly, pining, or blinded obstinacy begins.

His desires and exertions once roused, were ever stimulated by opposition. Smiles and vows easily won were lightly valued; smiles withheld were rated highly.

"Yes, but it is so! gentle maiden," he replied, half playfully, half peremptorily. "How does Miss Lyle, the stately Florence, regard us?—but as ministers to her wants and pleasures. Does not the whole country ring with her coldness and reserve?"

"Yes,—but then dear Florence says, that having no mother, she should be grave and dignified."

"You admit the reserve and coldness then, and have taxed her with it?"

"She is never cold to those she loves. Her father, Lady Emma Dunrayne, and myself, never find her cold; but I was vexed at what others said, and told her. She only smiled and answered, that as mistress of her father's house she must be very steady."

"But she must often check the love that would devote itself to her."

"She does not heed that, only talking of living with her father and forming his happiness."

"Her reserve then—I see you object to the term coldness—is universal?"

"Yes, except to the very young, or the old, or those whom she has known for years. She is polite to all, but I never knew her pleased with marked attention. Lord Dunrayne receives most of her favour; but then his sister is her dearest friend, and having played with him in childhood, she is naturally more unreserved towards him."

"How old is Lord Dunrayne?"

"About four-and-twenty, I believe."

"And what is he like?"

"I hardly know, he is so very changeable. Sometimes I think him handsome, sometimes plain. One day he will be delightful — so animated, so good-humoured; — the next, so sullen and ill-tempered, that nothing can please

him. He quite frightens me occasionally; but, I do not know how it is, Florence contrives to quiet him without yielding in anything."

"Where is he now?"

"At Brighton, I believe."

"What does Miss Lyle say of him?"

"I have heard her regret the unevenness of his temper, and say that his future life will depend much on his choice of a wife, though she feared no reasonable woman would risk her happiness in a union with a man of such uncontrolled passions."

"What if she should try to reform him herself?"

"That Florence never will! Even she sometimes will not stay in the same room with him; and every one else is glad to keep out of his way, if in one of his moods."

"How long has Mrs. Lyle been dead?"

"Some years. I think Florence was still a girl when she died; but her memory is fondly

cherished by husband and daughter. I have understood Florence is the image of her mother in form and feature, with only an occasional look of her father."

"It cannot be the recent loss of her mother that has caused her reserve. Was she never more lively?"

"Yes, a year or two since: but she says that she was only a child then, with a child's thoughtless, fearless gaiety; and now, being a woman, she naturally shows a woman's gravity."

"And you date this change from no particular time?"

"No: and if I rally her on the change, she says it is no change, only the natural course of time. In former days she was so gay and light-hearted, that her father used to call her his wild woodland bird. I became an orphan, left school, and did not see her for a long time. When she insisted on my paying her a visit, and indeed came herself to bring me,—for being

very, very poor, I had something like a proud fit, and was ill and low, — I found a different Florence from the Florence I had known before. Still kind—so delicately kind; but none of the bursts of wild and happy gaiety which I so well remembered. And her step was slower —more graceful perhaps; but I should have better liked its former bounding lightness. I thought she looked ill or not quite happy, and she said she was recovering from a severe illness, occasioned, I understood from others, by a fright from some runaway horses."

"Did she receive any injury?"

"No; the horses were stopped before they had overturned the carriage."

"She received no injury, you say, yet suffered a severe illness from the mere fright: I did not think Miss Lyle had been a coward."

"She is not generally, and to account for her illness many thought that she had received some undiscovered injury. I rarely touch on the subject, as it is evidently a painful one."

"Her alarm must have been very great. Who stopped the horses?"

"Mr. Gordon."

Julia had seen nothing but common curiosity in his former questions; she now neither remarked his start, nor look of sudden and angry intelligence.

"Who is Mr. Gordon?"

"He was a clerk in Mr. Lyle's counting-house, but, I believe, quitted him soon after the accident."

"Did you know him?"

"No; he was gone before I arrived."

"He was a great favourite with Miss Lyle, I suppose, after his gallantry?"

The question was put so carelessly as to occasion no remark.

"I scarcely know as to his being a favourite. Florence esteems him, and I dare say feels grateful; but she rarely names him. Once I heard her defend him warmly from some malicious insinuation, and I could almost have

fancied that her portrait had stepped from its frame to vindicate its artist. I could scarcely imagine it the same Florence I see day by day, so calm, so pale,—at times so very, very quiet."

Clanellon turned away—even Julia might have seen too much,—but almost immediately renewed the conversation as indifferently as before.

"You know nothing of Mr. Gordon, I think you said?"

"Nothing personally. All here speak kindly of him, praising his temper, mind, and manners. He won love by his kindness, respect by his talents."

"Miss Lyle must have regretted his departure."

"I never heard her say so, but conclude she did. He helped to plan her flower-garden, gave the design for her school-house, assisted her in drawing, and appears to have taken part in all her pursuits."

"Yet she rarely names, never regrets him;

so that you really believe her equally cold to all; and I must no longer consider myself an exception, but merely one of the common herd."

"Did you think she was colder to you than others?"

"Have you never thought so?"

Julia hesitated, and admitted that she had by defending her friend on the charge.

"I am sure Florence could never have meant to offend you; she is a great admirer of your talents."

Clanellon smiled; but it was not a pleasing smile.

"May none hope to thaw the iceberg and win her favour? Perhaps she is waiting for a coronet?"

"Oh no! Florence is above that," said Julia warmly.

"Are coronets, and those who wear them, so very despicable, Miss Desmond?" asked Clanellon haughtily.

"Oh no! not that—I could not mean that," she answered quickly.

A slight noise made Clanellon look up. Florence was standing at the open door with a cheek nearly as flushed as Julia's. Jealous! hoped and believed the viscount, struck with her anxious look; and he bent towards Julia, speaking, in a low tone, common words which must win their power and their meaning from the voice and look of him who spoke, and the hopes and thoughts of her who listened.

"Then you do not think the wearers of coronets contemptible?"

"Surely you could not believe I did!" faltered Julia without looking up.

"How could I tell? This is a strange cold world — a world of change and suffering; those we rely on to-day may deceive to-morrow."

"And can you have found it thus?" asked Julia with that open simplicity, which plainly showed that she considered none could be so depraved as to deceive him.

"Have I not? Yes! till the torn heart fears to trust, and trembles to confide, lest it should suffer former pangs."

"All do not deceive," said Julia in a voice so low as to be scarcely heard, whilst her head was bowed still lower, for his tone had said far more than his words.

Clanellon looked up. Florence was gone, and he was weary of the scene; besides, he felt some little compunction, and did not intend to commit himself.

"There are few who do not deceive, Miss Desmond. Better to suspect all—trust none." And rising abruptly, he walked to the other end of the room, leaving Julia to interpret this sudden change of manner as it pleased or did not please her, and to profit by his warning as she could.

Julia gazed after him in surprise; then the face was bent over the work, which she again took up, and the trembling fingers sought to guide the needle; but, after a few moments, she rose and left the apartment.

"Can I bring anything from Fairport for your dinner to-day, Florence?" asked her father, entering the library with his daughter almost immediately after.

"No, I thank you. The servants will bring biscuits, all that the housekeeper requires."

"Ay, you are a thoughtful manager, Florence, and never put off things to the last moment. I know I can rely on you to have everything as I could wish. You have ordered the curry to please Mr. Ashton? Those East Indians are so fussy and particular — so very critical!"

"I thought you could rely on my having everything as you could wish," remarked Florence archly.

"A fair rebuke, Florence. So I can; but I did not remember whether I had mentioned the curry to you before, and these Indians are touchy."

He had named it many times before; but Florence did not say so.

"The curry is made according to his own receipt. I even superintended its preparation myself; for Dobson, with all her good qualities, does not like a new dish, and will not always attend to the proportions."

"My child is ever thoughtful. I am anxious all should be handsome to-day, or the Earl of Aggenthorpe may think himself slighted: he is so proud, poor man. I pity him sincerely; a title without a fortune to support it must be a galling honour. For Mr. Ashton of course I care nothing, save that, as being my guest, I would wish to please him; but there is little chance of that. These Indians, accustomed to a princely style of living, cannot be expected to like our common-place modes. He always appears to be seeking cause for blame.—By-the-bye, I hear he is going to alter the garden at Ryeburns. Of course, the taste of a splendid East Indian and a plain English merchant could not accord."

"I am happy to say he is not going to

make any change. Overhearing me express the regret I should feel at any alteration, even its defects being endeared to me by the memory of my mother and the happy days of my childhood, he most kindly promised I should have no cause to grieve. Though delighted with this promise, I would have waved my wishes rather than inconvenience him; but he would not hear of this, only insisting that I should in return pay him a visit."

"It is strange! What could induce him to comply with your wish? And his eyes are seldom off you when in your society. It is strange!" repeated Mr. Lyle musingly.

"Strange that Mr. Ashton should grant my request and sometimes look at me? Why, my dear papa, can you, who have flattered me so long, be going to say rude things now?" And Florence wound her arm round her father's neck and looked witchingly up in his face.

"You are a sorceress, Florence, and know I cannot resist your spells," said the doting

father. "You would have me say you had made a conquest of this wealthy Indian?"

"And why for no? as the negroes say," asked the laughing Florence.

"And why for yes," replied her father with answering gaiety. "Would you become Mrs. Ashton?"

"Why, they say his diamonds are superb; and maidens like bright things."

"Must I give you to him then, Florence? I would rather give you to another," he added more gravely.

Her gaiety was gone in an instant, and a touching earnestness succeeded.

"No! no! you shall give me to none. I will be yours alone—we will live and die together."

"My child!" was all the father said for some moments as he held her closely to him; then recovering his composure, he replied,

"I must not be so selfish, Florence. I must not leave you lonely when I die, but must

give you to one deserving of you. My child would adorn the highest station."

"No! I would wed with none," said Florence hurriedly. "You will not send me from you, dearest father?"

"Not against your own will, Florence. How long have I played the tyrant that you should dread it? Does my child think I would compel her inclination?"

"No, not compel, as others would compel; but I could not bear a frown from you, scarcely a sad look."

"I frown on you, my child! It is you that are the tyrant, Florence, and turn me at your will. There, get you gone, or I shall play the woman;" yet his arm was still round her slender waist, and his fingers parted the dark ringlets from her brow as she looked fondly in his face. "Here have I been dallying with you instead of attending to my business. Should I become a bankrupt, the fault will rest with you," putting her gently from him.

"And I will bear the blame and penalty."

"You are a saucy girl, with that arch smile. I hear that the young men call you the iceberg: they do not see you, Florence, as I see you."

Florence knew they did not, but she thought it quite as prudent not to say so; and the father's words reverted to more material matters.

"Are you sure the pines and grapes are fine, Florence?—if not, I will try to get better at Fairport. Not that I should heed any one's finding fault with them; but the earl is apt to think himself not sufficiently honoured; and I suspect Mr. Ashton to be much of the same humour. He can be a pleasant man; but there is something strange about him—his eyes fix on you in a disagreeable way; and he shrinks from speaking of his younger days,—that always looks bad—a man must be ashamed of himself or his father. I hear he is going to build superb hothouses, and outdo us all in

Indian fruits. That is the way with those Easterns; they cannot live without splendour, and should not settle among us plain merchants."

"Plain merchants, papa!" and Florence playfully pointed her father's attention to the costly ornaments around them.

"You are a saucy girl, as I told you before," said her father, smiling at the arch rebuke. "We have won the right to these by honest industry, and must maintain the station we have acquired. Our splendours, as you term them, employ many manufacturers. As for you, your tastes are so simple, that you would be just as happy in a hut, if it were but picturesque with flowers twining round it."

"Yes, if those I loved were there and happy. Yet, no! I should not at all like sweeping the rooms and cooking the dinner. I am sure I should scorch all the roasts, smoke the boils, and burn the fricasees; and one could not keep servants in a hut. No, no;

my tastes are very gorgeous—I must have a cottage orné at the least."

"You are in one of the wild, happy moods of your childhood this morning, Florence. What has happened?"

"Oh, shocking! Who would ask why the sun shines? The question has transformed me into your grave and sober Florence again."

And, in truth, her playful gaiety disappeared, and a sigh succeeded.

"Who is detaining you now?" she asked, feeling his eyes were on her. "The pines and the grapes are as good and beautiful as Miss Florence herself, the old gardener has announced, so you cannot doubt their perfection."

"I do not. Shall I offer to call for the Mansons as I return, and send them back at night? They will only have a lonely half-hour before dinner to endure. The failure was no fault of his, and his conduct has been honour-

able throughout. His wife insisted on giving up the greater part of her settlement, and they live without a debt on a very small income. They should be honoured by all, and I hope, having persuaded them to visit us once, that they will come often."

"This is so like you, my dear father! ever pitying, ever seeking to aid the unfortunate," said Florence,

"With a smile on her lip and a tear in her eye."

"I will dress sooner, and be ready to receive them. I had intended to send my own carriage, being sure of your approbation, and thinking that their house being a little out of your way, the stopping might be inconvenient."

"Not at all! a failure is one of the greatest earthly misfortunes that can befal a man of business; and those who stand should not triumph over those who fall. It is a fate may attend us all."

However Mr. Lyle might believe that he thought such a fate liable to attend himself,

his look round the apartment plainly showed that he in reality considered such an event, in his own case, next to impossible.

"I hear Stanton is returned; shall I bring him back with me? It is a poor trade authorship, and they little less than mad who follow it: but we, who are sane and rich, can afford to show those, who are mad and poor, some few civilities. In time he may see his folly, and I will try and get him a place in the Excise: even genius must eat."

"No scandal on genius, if you please, papa. You know I am its devoted admirer."

"Yes, according to your station. You would patronise these sort of people when deserving—that is very right—but you would never think of becoming an author! Yet there is no accounting for the perversion of human intellect.—Well then, I shall bring back Stanton and the Mansons. To be sure, the Mansons are rather stupid; but then they are of high, real worth."

"Yes, they are," replied Florence, "and deserving of every honour. And geniuses are mad, you know," she added archly. "Will you offer Mr. Stanton a bed?"

"I suppose I must humour your fancies; but take care, or you will be called blue."

"Never mind, if they do not call me black."

CHAPTER IX.

"Be wise! So speak, that if one say,
'Twas thus—and thus—thou saidst, thou canst declare,
Not thus—but thus."

"De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace."
DANTON.

FLORENCE stood some moments in thought after her father's departure, then with a sigh walked towards one of the shelves and began looking for a book.

"Can I assist you in your search, Miss Lyle?" said Clanellon, advancing from the recess of the further window.

"I was not aware of your presence," remarked Florence in surprise and evident vexa-

tion. "When my father inquired for you, one of the servants said that you were on the lawn."

"The servant's information was not correct: I have been in this room for the last hour."

Then he had heard her conversation with her father, and Florence was vexed at the circumstance: nor were other parts of his conduct more to her pleasure. An increase of her usual torpidity was the immediate consequence.

"Shall I have the honour of selecting a work for your perusal?" asked Clanellon after a moment's study of her countenance.

What but jealousy could have caused her evident discomposure? What sign more promising for love or vanity?

"Thank you, I need not trouble you. I am merely looking for the second volume of a work promised to Mr. Ashton; and here it is."

"Do not deny me the pleasure of serving you in something, Miss Lyle. Let me pack it up;" taking it from her hand as he spoke, and

folding the paper round it. "I think I have not seen this Mr. Ashton."

"No: he only returned three days since, and you were out when he called."

"I have little cause to consider this a misfortune, to judge from your father's words; though he allows that he can be pleasant sometimes. I consider Mr. Lyle's penetration so acute, that I feel justified in relying on his opinion."

Florence looked on him searchingly, but nothing of irony was visible; and whatever might be her suspicions, she answered as if he had spoken in good faith. Penetration was Mr. Lyle's weak point, though he piqued himself occasionally on his acute observation; but, save in mere matters of business, few men were more habitually blind.

"My father knows but little of Mr. Ashton, who only came into the neighbourhood in March. His kindness to those around him speaks highly in his favour."

"He is a favourite of yours."

"I am interested in his character, and thankful for his attention to my wishes, as you heard perhaps in my conversation with my father."

"Yes, and envied him your thanks."

Florence made no reply.

"Will you not indulge in a stroll on the lawn?" he asked, seeing her take up the hated carpet-work.

"Not this morning: I have rather an intricate piece of pattern to trace. You will find some new books on that table, which may amuse you."

"I am rather inclined to endeavour to amuse Miss Lyle than Lord Clanellon."

"Do not think of it: Miss Lyle is not worth the trouble."

"You are thwart, as your old nurse says, though never intending the term for you. You would lure me on to compliment, and then lecture on the sin; but I am not to be tempted into error or ill temper this morning."

"I congratulate you!" her generally unvarying tone charactered by a shade of irony.

Perhaps the lady fancied she had seen symptoms of both not many hours since. If the gentleman observed this, he did not deem it worthy or fitting remark.

"You may indeed congratulate me: I am in one of those happy, hopeful moods, when the air breathes perfume and the earth glows in beauty; when the heart knows no pain, but that it has not power to enjoy the exceeding greatness of its own happiness, but, dazzled by its splendour, shrinks even from the glory of its own high hopes."

"You are poetical!" said Florence, looking at him in surprise, for this sudden gush of poetry was beyond her comprehension.

"Will you not ask me of this hope, which has unbound the frozen tide of joy, bringing to life a second spring, radiant in beauty—the sunshine of the heart? Or may I believe a

secret sympathy has led you to divine its source?"

"No, indeed, Lord Clanellon! I am a poor, stupid creature, unable to understand the text of your poetical extravagance without explanatory notes."

"There are hopes the bloom of whose beauty would be spoiled by the trammels of description: too lovely, too delicate, too sacred for words, they should be only known through the sympathy of hearts!"

Florence looked silent amaze, though a faint glow came on her cheek, perhaps from his fixed gaze and a flickering consciousness.

Clanellon resumed.

"You do not ask me to explain this hope;—may I not then indulge in the delightful flattery that you understand it without words? that you feel it without explanation? that a sympathy with that hope has revealed its meaning?"

"Your words are so strange and mysterious,

Lord Clanellon—so different from any I ever heard you use before, that I must again repeat, that their meaning is beyond my comprehension. Had we not better send for Julia to teach us to understand each other? She is more versed in the sentimental than myself."

It was evident she was doubtful of his meaning, perhaps perplexed by comparing the past and the present; but her proposal of sending for Julia made him believe that the jealousy which he imagined secretly working in his favour now alone stood in the way of an open acknowledgment of regard.

"Why send for Miss Desmond? She is good and gentle; but she has neither the sympathies nor the intelligences of minds of the highest order. One might seek her for pity—in sorrow her gentle smile would be a balm; but she could not comprehend the tortures which the lofty soul endures when its highest, proudest hopes are blighted. She might soothe a common mind—

might joy in its joys; but her yielding gentleness, the sign of weakness, would jar on a bolder spirit. It is only the lofty can understand the lofty — it is only the exalted can feel with the exalted; — then spirit mingles with its fellow spirit!—soul clings to soul!—heart grows to heart! Who — what shall divide them? — Florence, you understand me! you feel with me! I see it in your glowing cheek— I read it in your downcast eye and trembling frame. We are one in sympathy!—in hope!— in love!"

He would have taken her hand, but she withdrew it haughtily, hastily, as if the mere attempt to touch it was contamination—the desecration of some devoted thing.

"If Miss Lyle does understand you, Lord Clanellon, she understands that which awakens neither pleasure nor admiration. Her spirit mingles not with yours: she has with you no sympathy—no thought in common. If your words have no meaning, they are folly! — if

they have a meaning, considering the demeanour ever observed towards yourself, and that which you have observed towards another, your presumptuous words — your confident hope— are little less than insult."

For an instant Clanellon shrank from the almost sublime expression of her contempt. So bright was the cheek's glow—so brilliant the dark eye's flashing—so marked the curl of the ruby lip, that an idiot even could not have doubted. It was a splendid vision of female indignation! From the force of the feeling breaking through her general restraint, the whole strength of her character was exhibited in the burst. Florence fancied she caught a muttered word unfit for female ear or Christian tongue—a lightning glance of wrath and disappointment; and then she doubted her own senses, for Clanellon stood before her with no expression on his features but indignant and innocent surprise.

"Insult, Miss Lyle? Good Heavens! what

can you mean? Can you believe me so base as to offer insult in a house where I have received such unbounded hospitality? Insult to a female—and to you?"

Florence was not prepared for this, and looked the indignant vexation she experienced. She made no reply, and he proceeded.

"What meaning can you have given to my words that you deem them so presumptuous? What is the too confident hope to which you allude so indignantly?"

To be thoroughly convinced that she had interpreted his words correctly—to feel that he had expected to win her through pique and jealousy, awakened by his unmanly conduct to another—that other her friend—to be certain that he had anticipated a favourable answer to his love, whose very naming was to her vexation;—to feel, to know all this, and then to see him standing before her looking all innocent surprise and gentlemanly indignation, asking humbly in what he had offended, and waiting for her answer,

which would afford him the triumph of throwing back the charge of vanity and presumption on herself by denying, of course courteously, having ever entertained such presumptuous hopes, or intended to sue for her hand,—for she had no doubt such would be his conduct;—to feel, to know all this, without daring to resent it as she wished, was a bitter task indeed. She felt — deeply felt the double insult; but she also felt that for Julia's sake, as well as for other reasons, she must not yield to her indignation. Her heart swelled—the blood mounted to her very temples, and her dark eye still turned upon him its indignant glance; but her words, by a strong effort, were of the same measured tone and meaning as marked her general conversation: — a slight faltering was alone to be observed.

"I told you, Lord Clanellon, I was no solver of enigmas,—no reader of strange and mysterious texts. If I have mistaken your meaning, you are alone to blame for the misunderstand-

ing. Why you clothed that meaning in such high-flown and mystical language, used for the first time, you can best explain: of course, it was not to mystify, or leave you at liberty to profess such a meaning hereafter as might please you best."

"You cannot possibly suppose it should be so, Miss Lyle,—I were then unworthy to remain one moment longer in your presence," replied Clanellon with just such a tone and such a manner as was fitting. "If you recollect, your father said you were in one of your wild, happy moods to-day; and when he questioned wherefore, you replied, 'Who would ask why the sun shines?' This was the text on which my commentaries were founded. I too felt in that same light and happy mood, and that to ask the cause of such a mood would be to mar its beauty. A something — a wordless presentiment, I believe, has depressed my spirit lately. This morning that depression was no more: all was beauty—all was brightness. The words

of others and my own had a touching harmony. I heard you speaking thus, and I fancied there must be some sympathy between us—that we alike indulged in brilliant visions for the future, though possibly those visions might bear no resemblance to each other. I imagined that the beautiful harmony of our own minds had made each glow with love to our fellow-mortals; and the feeling being somewhat sentimental—or mystical, if you will have it so—was naturally clothed in appropriate language. In the glow and excitement of my buoyancy of spirit, I fear I transgressed in venturing to address you by your beautifully romantic name of Florence. This, I believe, is the head and front of my offending; and for this, with the impropriety of having believed you guilty of romance, or sentiment, or feeling, or whatever it may be, I make my apologies. If you accuse me of aught else, I am prepared to defend myself."

"You have made a clever defence, my lord: I accuse you of nothing."

"Then you declare me innocent of presumption, and of any other meaning than that which I have avowed?"

"I have already said I make no charge."

"Then you regard me as a friend again!"—extending his hand, and speaking in a tone indicative of animated pleasure.

But the lady's hand was drawn back: she would not stoop to such a mockery. "You will receive from me, my lord, the same polite attention as before."

A servant entering at the moment, said a poor woman wished to see Miss Lyle, who left the room immediately.

It was more than an hour before she returned, and much of that time had been spent in calming her indignation—in chiding and soothing her ruffled spirit. Naturally of a sweet temper and noble disposition, yet Florence had her faults—some allied to her very nobleness. The same energy of character, which made her so active in aid of the suffering—so fearless in

the defence of the oppressed and slandered, sometimes led her into too great a warmth: her indignation at what was base or evil became so strong as to partake itself of error. Aware of this, she had long struggled on holy principles to control these sudden ebullitions of an impetuous spirit; and though sometimes overcome by the very suddenness of the attack, she might boast—save that Florence was too humble to boast—of many a victory achieved over a besetting sin. Still this life is a life of warfare: the foe is never wholly vanquished; — defeated once—twice—thrice, still he rallies; the trial comes, and again the foe must be met face to face, foot to foot, without shrinking — without yielding—bold in acquired strength, yet humbled at the thought that year after year the same temptation shall cause a struggle or a fall.

The unvarying prosperity, that spared Florence a dependance on the humours of others, and, to a certain extent, placed her beyond the

thwartings and contradictions to which many are subject, and which, joined to her kindness, saved her from impertinence or malice, rather encouraged than repressed this indignant warmth, though affording it but few occasions to break forth. It must be admitted that the late conduct of Clanellon, supposing it such as Florence did suppose it, was deserving of the strongest censure, and was doubly galling to one who had been reared on the milk of praise and love: no wonder therefore that she should feel it deeply, and be highly indignant at his treachery to Julia, in making her love a lever wherewith to raise jealousy in herself,—still more so at his supposing such a feeling would insure his acceptance; whilst his confident air in wooing, his bold denial of having wooed, and ingenious explanation, might almost warrant any degree of anger. The anger of Florence was certainly not slight. She wished him no ill—she would have done him no wrong; still she felt that her spirit was more chafed than it

should be,—her pride more roused than she had imagined possible. She had sought during her absence to soothe this chafing—to subdue this pride; and her efforts, if not wholly successful, (turbid waters will not calm at once,) had certainly not been without some effect. And well for her that it was so, since her trials of temper for the day were not nearly concluded. Believing she had seen Clanellon walking in the grounds, she was startled and annoyed on re-entering the library to find him there, and his occupation one of the very last which she would have desired. He was seated where she had left him, with the contents of her work-box scattered round; a card, which she knew at a glance to have been taken from its most secret recess, lying soiled and rumpled so near one foot as to show it had been trampled on; whilst another, its fellow, was held with that strong grasp—surveyed with that ireful look, which shows no summer mood. Florence paused for an instant to overcome her surprise—to control

her again rising indignation, and then advanced towards him with a quicker step than usual. He looked up as she approached, too intent to remark her before; lowered his eyes as though in shame; raised them again, surveying her for some moments with a mixture of curiosity, wrath, and triumph;—then every disagreeable expression vanished from his features, and he was the bland, the friendly, the courteous Clanellon of common times.

"I have been arranging your workbox for you during your absence. My residence at Atherton has given me a taste for being useful, and I have some thoughts of being an idle man no longer."

The frank and winning manner in which this was said gained him no favour with Florence; it was but an aggravation of his offence; and, despite all her efforts, she felt the colour rising on her cheek, whilst her voice lost its customary unemphatic calmness.

"Rather, disarranging my workbox, I should

say, Lord Clanellon," pointing to the scattered articles. "I will thank you, when next inclined to be useful, to employ your powers more profitably, or in the service of one more likely to be grateful. An acquaintance of some weeks should have taught you that I have so much particularity, as to prefer my things remaining where I put them, to having them thrown about, and injured or lost."

As she spoke, she stooped to raise the card at his feet; the quickness of her movement plainly proving that she considered its station one rather degrading to its worth.

A careless yet hurried motion of Clanellon's foot secured the card under the sole of his peculiarly well-made boot; and Florence resumed her erect position, after the fruitless attempt, with a deeper flush upon her cheek and a less calm expression in her eye. She felt he was triumphing in the annoyance he occasioned, but not a hint of this triumph was to be traced in his countenance: instead of shunning her

look, or shrinking from it, he met it with the boldness of perfect innocence — the winning warmth of friendly feeling. The only observable mark of evil thoughts was the rather injurious twisting of the card in his hand. Eager for its safety, Florence made an endeavour to obtain it.

"May I trouble you to give me that card?" she said, extending her hand towards it; but a backward motion placed it beyond her reach. "Did you hear me, Lord Clanellon? I will trouble you for that card!" she repeated with a haughtiness which he had never seen before, finding that he showed no inclination to comply or excuse.

"You shall have a better card, if you wish for one to wind your silk on; this is yellow and soiled;" holding out one of his own cards with the graceful ease of innocence.

"I wish for the card you took from from my workbox, and no other," she replied, her indignation at his impertinence increasing every instant.

"This is a much more elegant card, Miss Lyle, even you must admit," he continued in courteous playfulness.

"It is worthless in my eyes, my lord. I demand the other."

"What do you quarrel with in my card? I pique myself on its elegance."

"There are many things on which Lord Clanellon may pique himself: I trust he will add politeness to the number, and restore that to which he has no right."

"We will make a bargain, Miss Lyle, such as might satisfy any merchant or merchant's daughter. You shall have twenty of my cards in exchange for this single soiled one, for which I have a particular fancy;" and drawing a handful of cards from his pocket, he showered them on the table before her, as in playful sport.

"I have already told your lordship, that those cards are worthless in my sight, and your trifling, at the very best, ill-timed. You can

have no other reason for retaining that card than the desire to annoy me."

"You do me wrong; I have a much more amiable excuse for retaining possession of the card: I wish for the address."

"For what can you possibly desire the address?" she demanded in surprise.

"Ah, Miss Lyle! I have convicted you of a feminine weakness at last. You are curious!"

"Do not lay any weakness I may show, to the charge of my sex, nor expect thus to turn the subject. I am weary of the altercation."

"I should scarcely have characterised our words by so harsh a term: I should have said, a play, a sport. But, since you weary of it, yield and end it."

"No!" she replied still more decidedly.

"No! Why, I shall convict you of another weakness. I thought you far above the determination of always having your own way."

"In the present instance, at least, such is my resolve," she replied impatiently.

"Indeed!" he said in a provoking tone of careless incredulity. "You cannot know whose card you are making of such consequence. The poor youth's brain would be turned did he guess how much he was honoured, though in ignorance. Whose card do you think it is, Miss Lyle?" fixing on her a penetrating, and, she thought, triumphant gaze.

She felt all that she believed he wished her to feel — felt that he guessed at that which she would have wished unguessed at even by herself. She turned away; her colour went and came, knowing herself exposed to his scrutiny; then, summoning all her self-command, she met his searching look with one of calm contempt.

"It is Mr. Gordon's card," she said in a low but unfaltering voice.

"Oh! you know the card then!" in admirable surprise. "Yes, the name is Gordon,—Walter Gordon—rather a romantic name. And the writing is tolerable for a nobody, though scarcely an aristocratic scrawl: too legible for

an author, too finical for a genius, I fancy. Did I pretend to read character from writing, I should say that he was one of the order of tolerables; not an absolute fool, but certainly not a superlative genius; not a mighty mind, that must soar, or sink beneath his fellows; not one to fix his fate by a happy and daring stroke, but one likely to allow the favourable moment to pass by. In his works I should expect conceits rather than sublimities; sentimentality rather than feeling or passion; in short, a middle man,—in life or love, weighing the cost before he ventured on the pain. One calculated for a clerk when sobered down; whom I should rather set to write verses in a young lady's album, than to sing of mighty deeds—to thread a fan, rather than the maze of thought. I pique myself on my discrimination in these matters:—am I not correct?" he asked with his former careless courtesy, showing no observation of the lip quivering beneath the repress-

ing teeth, or the crimson flood that rushed over neck and brow, as he stated his pretended belief.

"You are not correct, Lord Clanellon, and you feel you are not," she replied in a voice that awed him for a moment:—the next he resumed the subject with his former pretended indifference.

"Then you think Walter Gordon will make a greater poet than I do? I dare say you are correct, having had more opportunity of judging. He may have addressed some lines to you; and this only confirms my previous intention. You asked why I wished for the poor fellow's address, and I can have no objection to inform you. Your father tells me that he is going to publish, and has rather interested me in his behalf; so, as I think with Mr. Lyle, one should encourage genius, though the youth has shown some simplicity in choosing so poor a trade, I will see what I can do to procure subscribers

for his book: in fine, for the sake of that divine portrait of his, I intend to patronise Walter Gordon."

"You patronise Walter Gordon!" repeated Florence, some strong feeling conquering her emotion and enabling her to repeat the name without a sign of hesitation. The cool contempt with which she mentioned his proposition, as if speaking of an impossibility, galled him more than could any indignation, and his handsome features were for an instant distorted with rage.

"Now this is really too severe, Miss Lyle! you know I am heedless; and think I shall forget this intention, and not write to propose it."

"I should scarcely think that you would write,—you certainly would not say it!"

"Why not?"

"Should you ever meet Mr. Gordon, you will understand. The address on the card being no longer correct, it would be useless to

retain it;" and she again extended her hand, but he still held it beyond her reach.

"You seem to set a peculiar value on this card. Is it a talisman whose possession is to shield you from every ill; or do you only prize it so immoderately for the sake of the romantic name it bears? I understood from Mr. Lyle, that the gentleman had forfeited your good opinion."

The eyes of Florence sank beneath his searching gaze, but again she forced herself to reply with calmness: no imputation, real or pretended, must rest on Walter Gordon, whatever might be the opinion founded on her defence.

"You must have misunderstood my father, Lord Clanellon: Mr. Gordon has never forfeited my good opinion—there is no one of whom I think more highly. The sketch on the other side of the card will account for my desire to repossess it: it is a correct representation of a favourite haunt of my dear mo-

ther's at Ryeburns, the home of my childhood."

Clanellon turned the card and looked at the sketch,—only a sketch, and very small, but still with such bold, free touches as spoke a master's hand—and he knew at once that that hand was Gordon's.

"Only a sketch, and rather rubbed," he said carelessly. It is but just that I should repair the damage I have done; and you must allow me to present you with a drawing of the scene worthy of its beauty and of your esteem, in lieu of this injured sketch."

"I will have that sketch and no other, my lord; and insist on your restoring it!"

"What if I should be bold enough to resist your command?" he demanded with a manner that might be taken for play or earnest.

"You dare not, Lord Clanellon!" she replied, whilst her figure rose to its full height, and her dark eye looked contempt and decision.

"Dare not, Miss Lyle? I am a bold man!" he answered with a manner bordering on defiance.

"I know you are bold; but I repeat my words—you dare not!"

He looked at her keenly for some moments; but her unshrinking meeting of the look, the expression of her features, and the firmness with which she had spoken, convinced him that she was not to be turned or trifled with. The viscount's manner changed in an instant: if he felt wrath at being compelled to yield, none could have guessed it—none could have apologised more gracefully.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Lyle, for supposing you were in jest. I am indeed most unhappy in mistakes this morning; but had I guessed before how much my playfulness distressed you, I should have been grave long since. I hope I have not much injured the sketch: as connected with your mother's memory, I know it to be precious."

She took it, but her sole reply was an inclination of the head.

"Now I must thank you for the one under your foot;—that has another sketch."

He moved his foot, looking down as if unconscious that he had been trampling on the card, and raising it from the ground, handed it to her.

"I have been doubly in error, and must throw myself on your mercy, trusting to your kindness for forgiveness."

Florence again bowed slightly, occupying herself in enfolding the cards in the same silver paper in which they had before been wrapped, and then placing them securely in a quiet recess in her workbox. Whether they were long allowed to remain in what had proved an unsafe asylum, or were removed to a more secure abiding-place, matters not. She would then have arranged the other displaced articles scattered in confusion on the table, but Clanellon interposed.

"That should be my task," he said gently and playfully. "You shall see how skilfully I will repair the mischief occasioned by my folly, and admire my talent for arranging a lady's pretty nothings."

Florence hesitated: she seemed inclined to leave the room; then resolved on staying, it might be with the intention of proving that her anxiety for the recovery of the cards had been nothing excessive—her excitement and emotion not so great as to unfit her for his presence. She resigned the beautifully-carved ivory measure into his hands, and, seating herself on the sofa, without making any reply, took up her carpet-work—that work which Clanellon so much detested,—and began most conscientiously counting the stitches.

Even this did not appear to discompose the viscount: he arranged the contents of the box with feminine skill, though certainly not what is called a lady's man; and so eloquently did he discourse during the performance of his

task and after its completion, selecting those subjects which he knew from experience would interest his taciturn companion, that before the elegant timepiece on the mantel-shelf had sounded the second quarter, in spite of her annoyance at and contempt for his late conduct, and her suspicions of his present mood and purpose, Florence found herself listening with pleasure to his conversation, and seduced by its brilliancy into an occasional forgetfulness of the intricacies of her work. In appearance, if not in reality, he had succeeded in establishing himself on his former footing; and little flattering as that footing was, as the result of a month's residence under the same roof, it was a mighty triumph considering his words and demeanour of the morning, and that the tact and penetration of Florence were little inferior to his own.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

London: Printed by Samuel Bentley, Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
823 P585M C001 v.1
Merchant's daughter /
3 0112 088987430